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(54) **NEUROSTIMULATION SYSTEM**

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See application file for complete search history.

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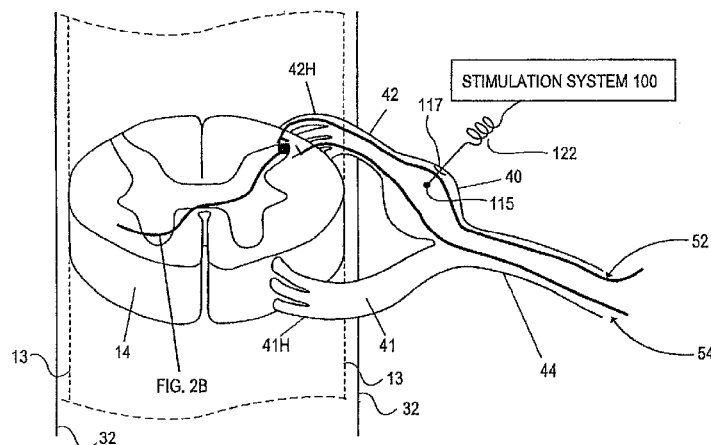
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ABSTRACT

Some embodiments of the present invention provide neurostimulation systems and components for selective stimulation and/or neuromodulation of one or more dorsal root ganglia through implantation of an electrode on, in or around a dorsal root ganglia. Some other embodiments of the present invention provide neurostimulation systems adapted for selective neurostimulation of one or more nerve root ganglia as well as techniques for applying neurostimulation to the spinal cord. Still other embodiments of the present invention provide stimulation systems and components for selective stimulation and/or neuromodulation of one or more dorsal root ganglia through implantation of an electrode on, in or around a dorsal root ganglia in combination with a pharmacological agent.

11 Claims, 47 Drawing Sheets



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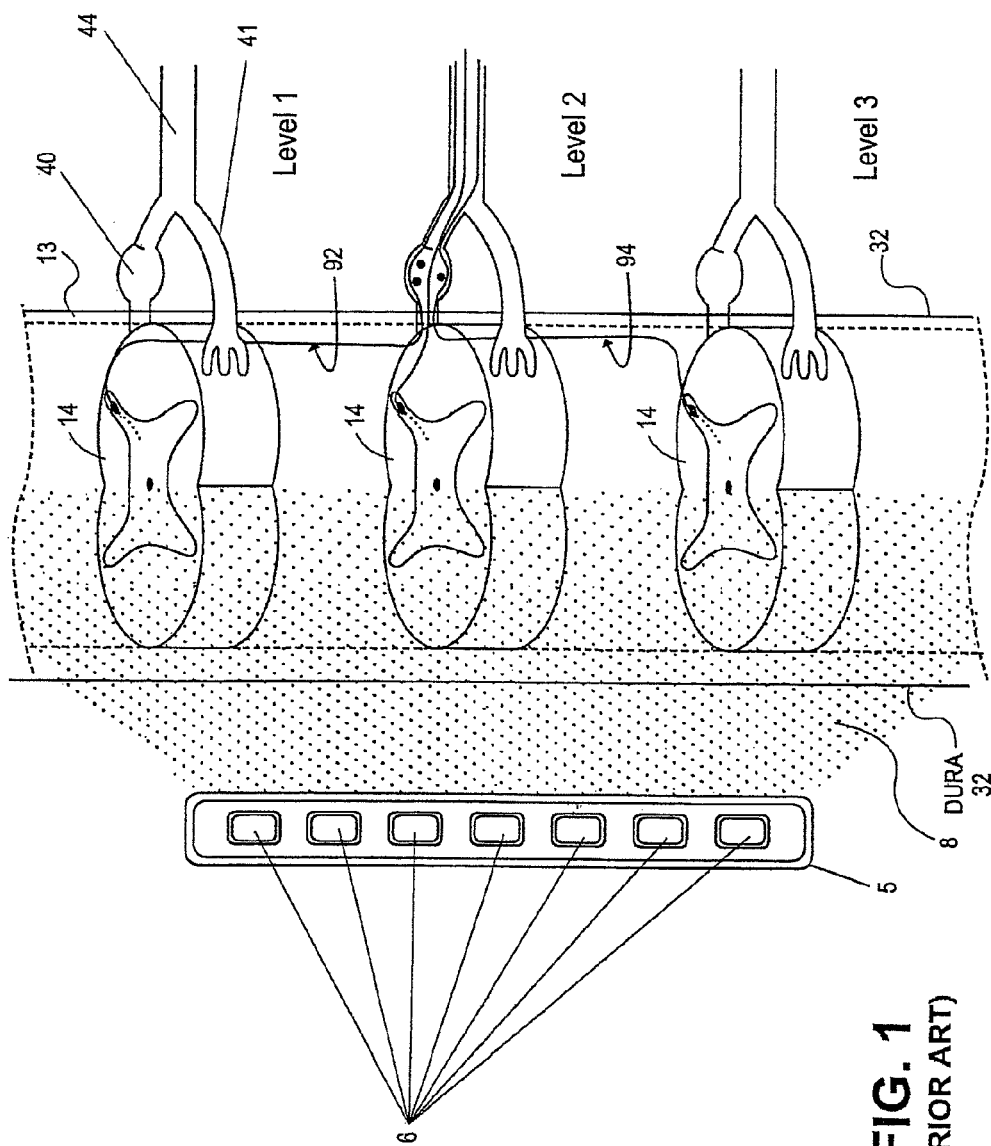
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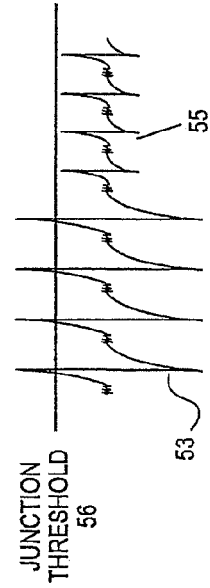
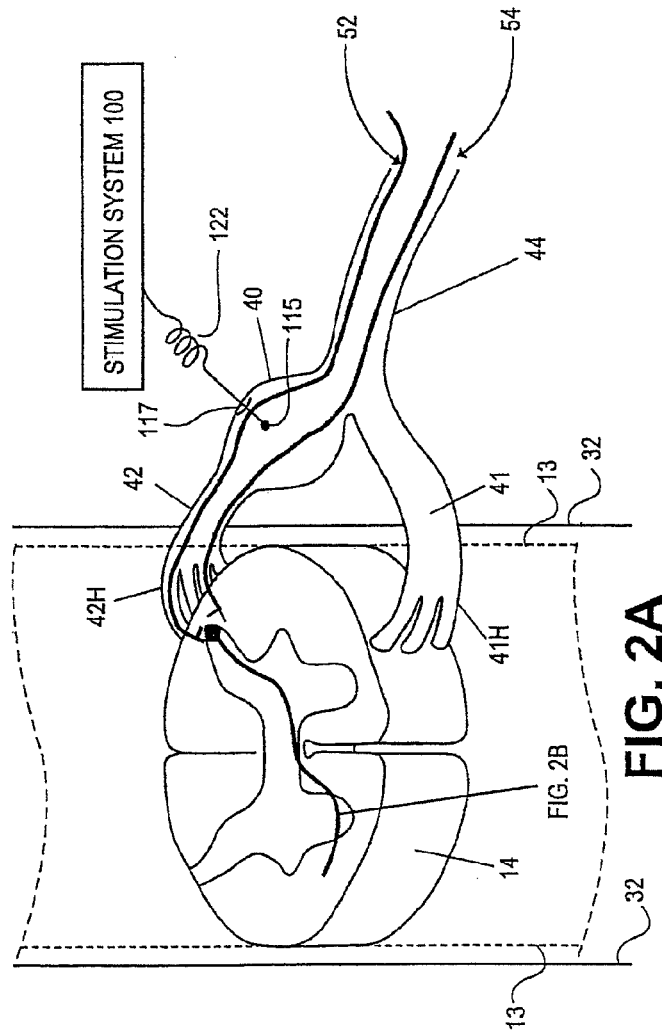
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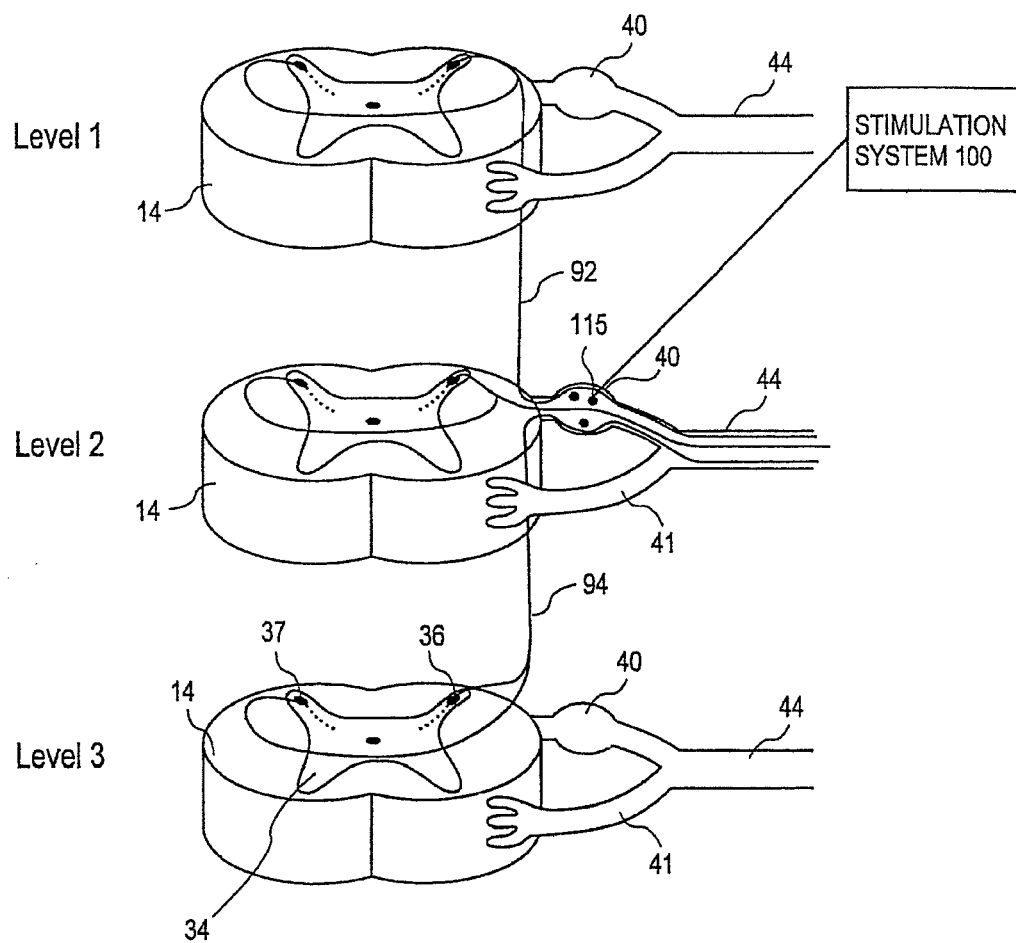


FIG. 3A

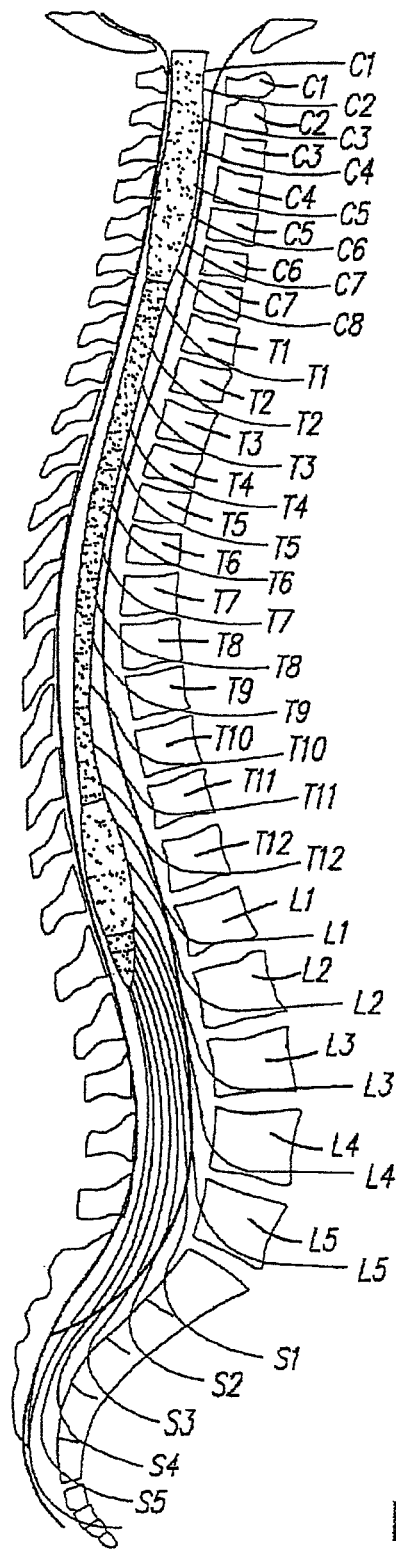


FIG. 3B

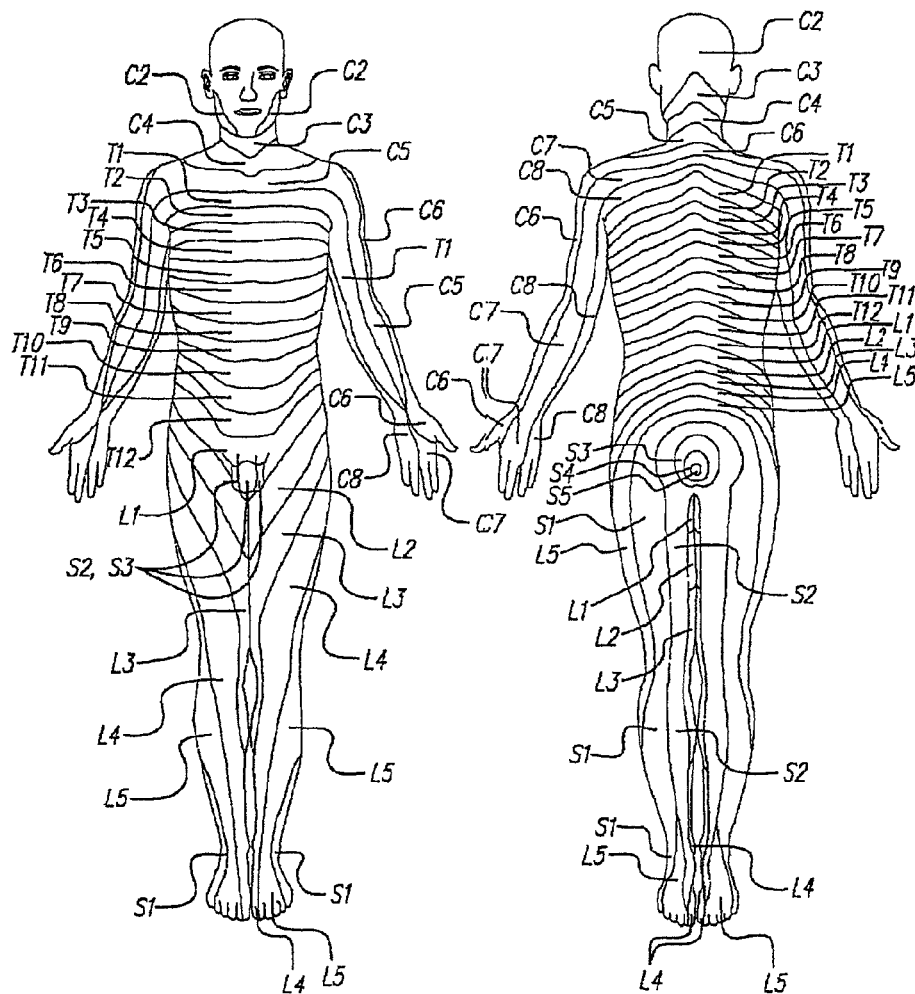
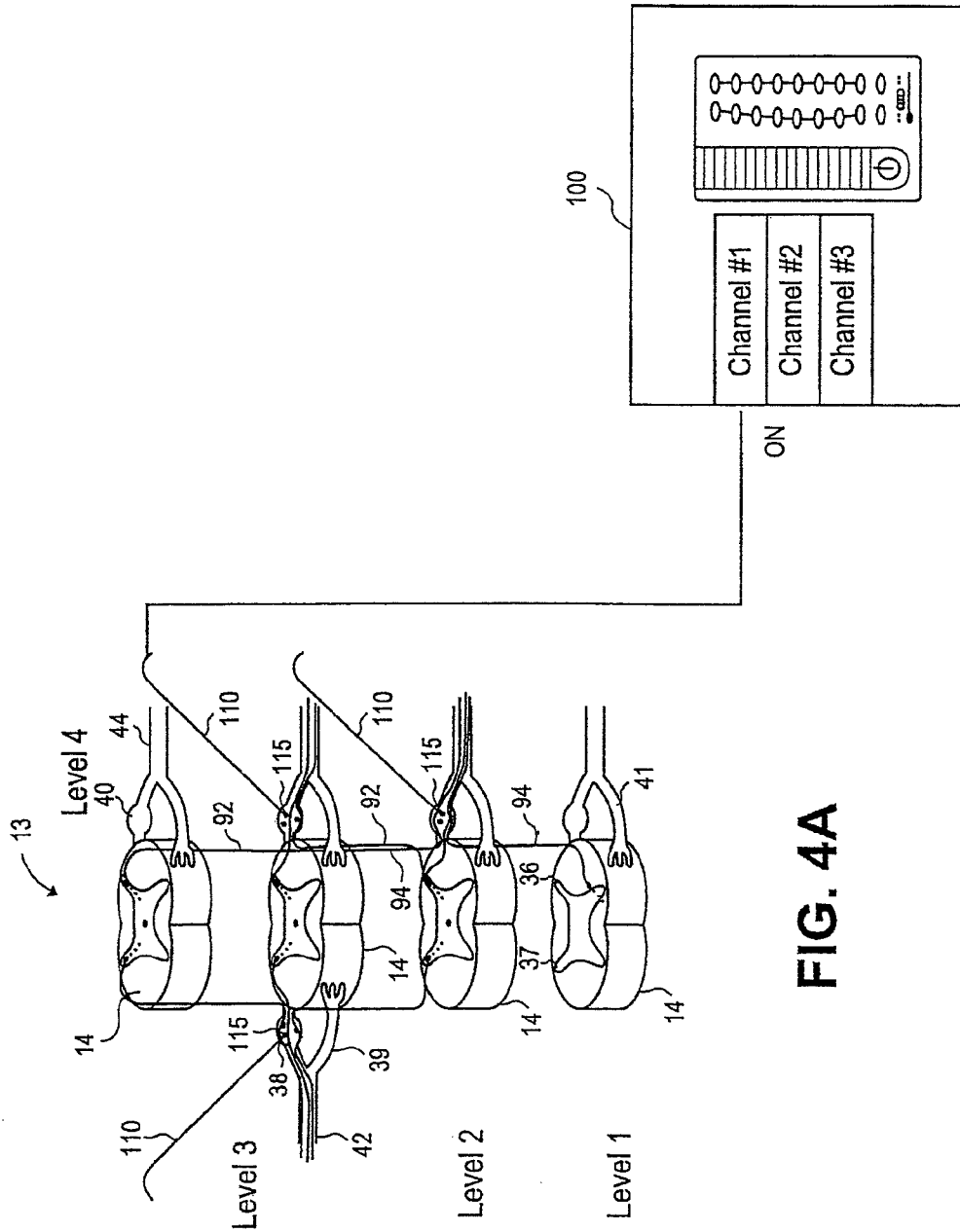
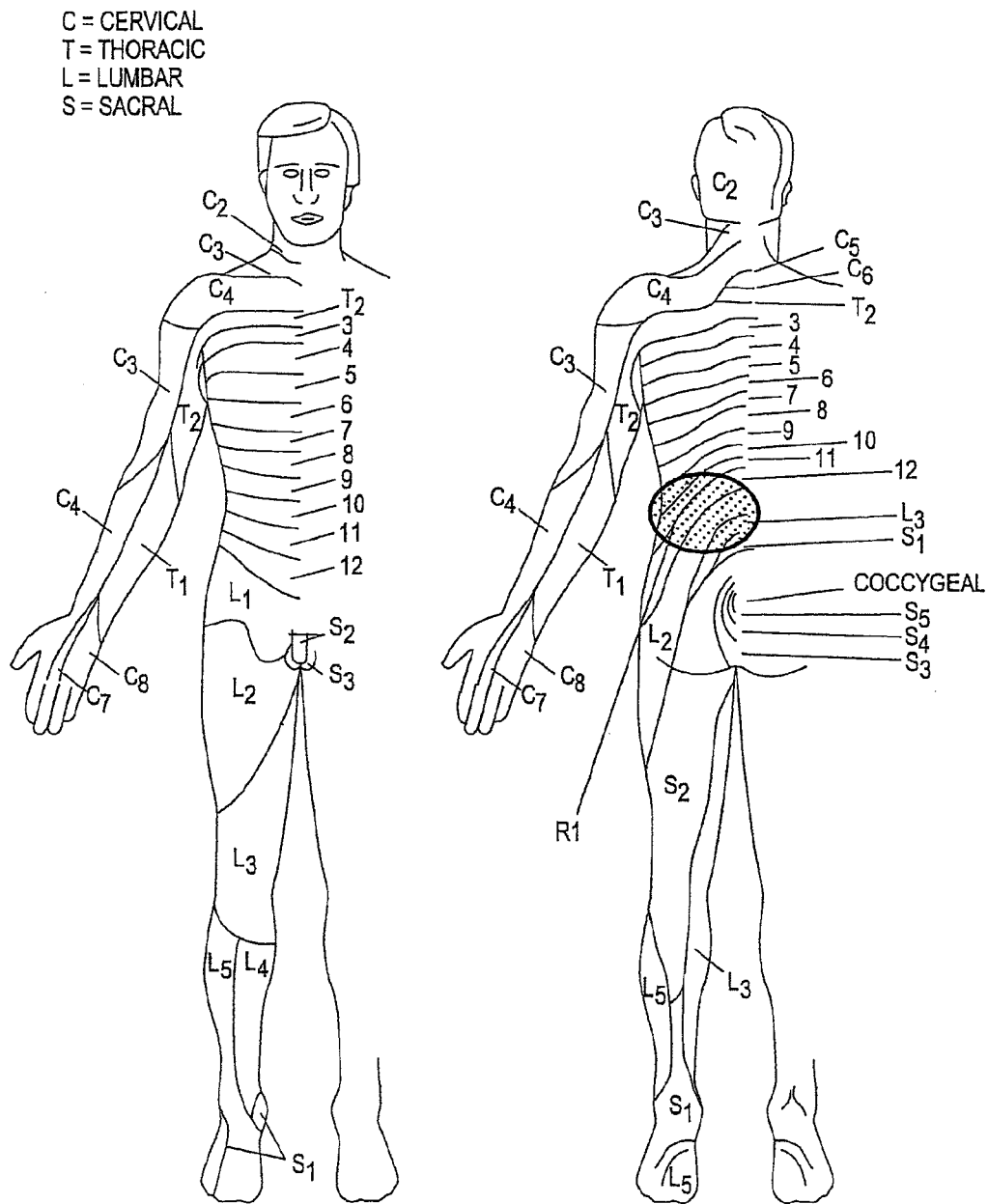


FIG. 3C





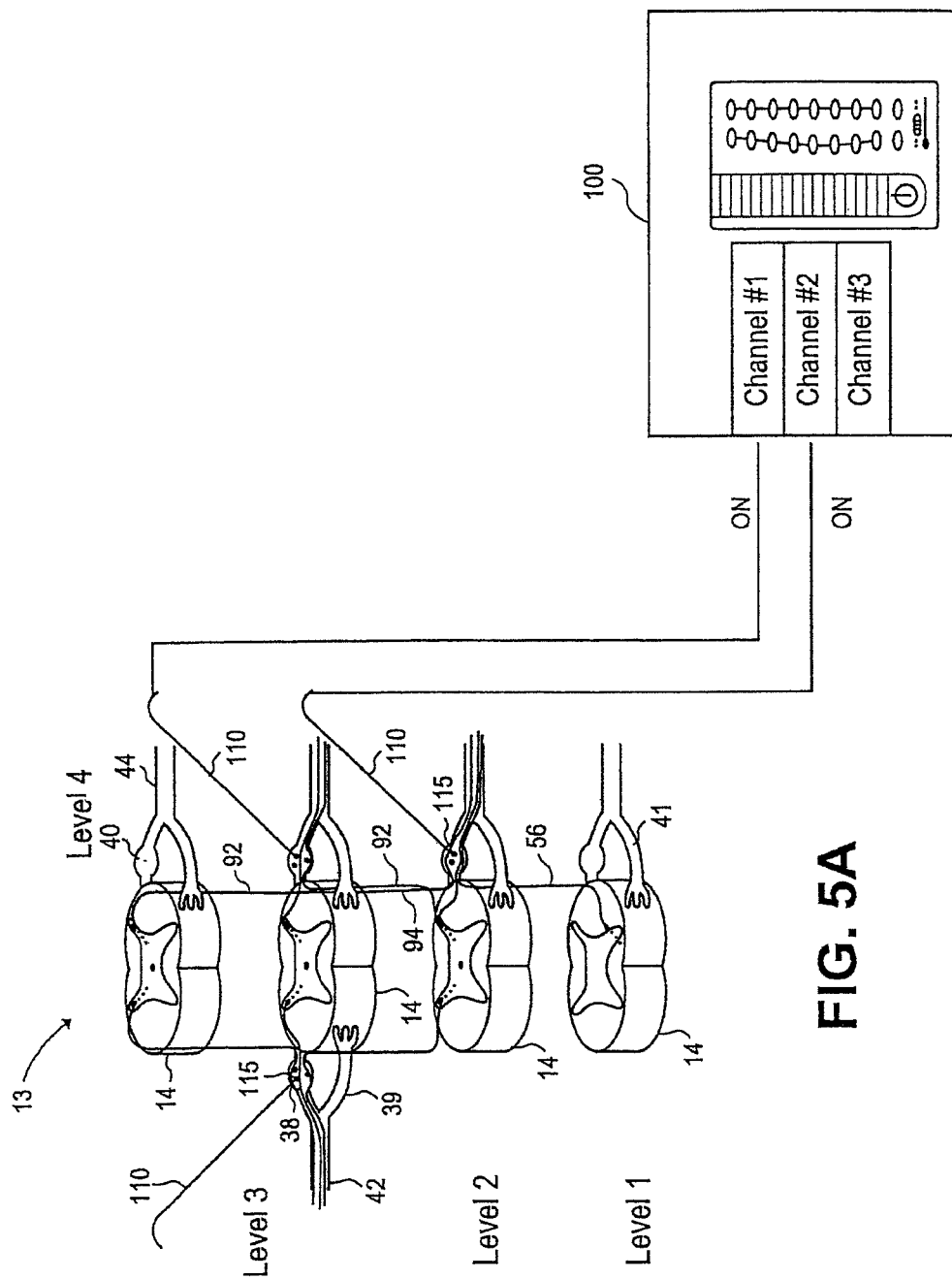


FIG. 5A

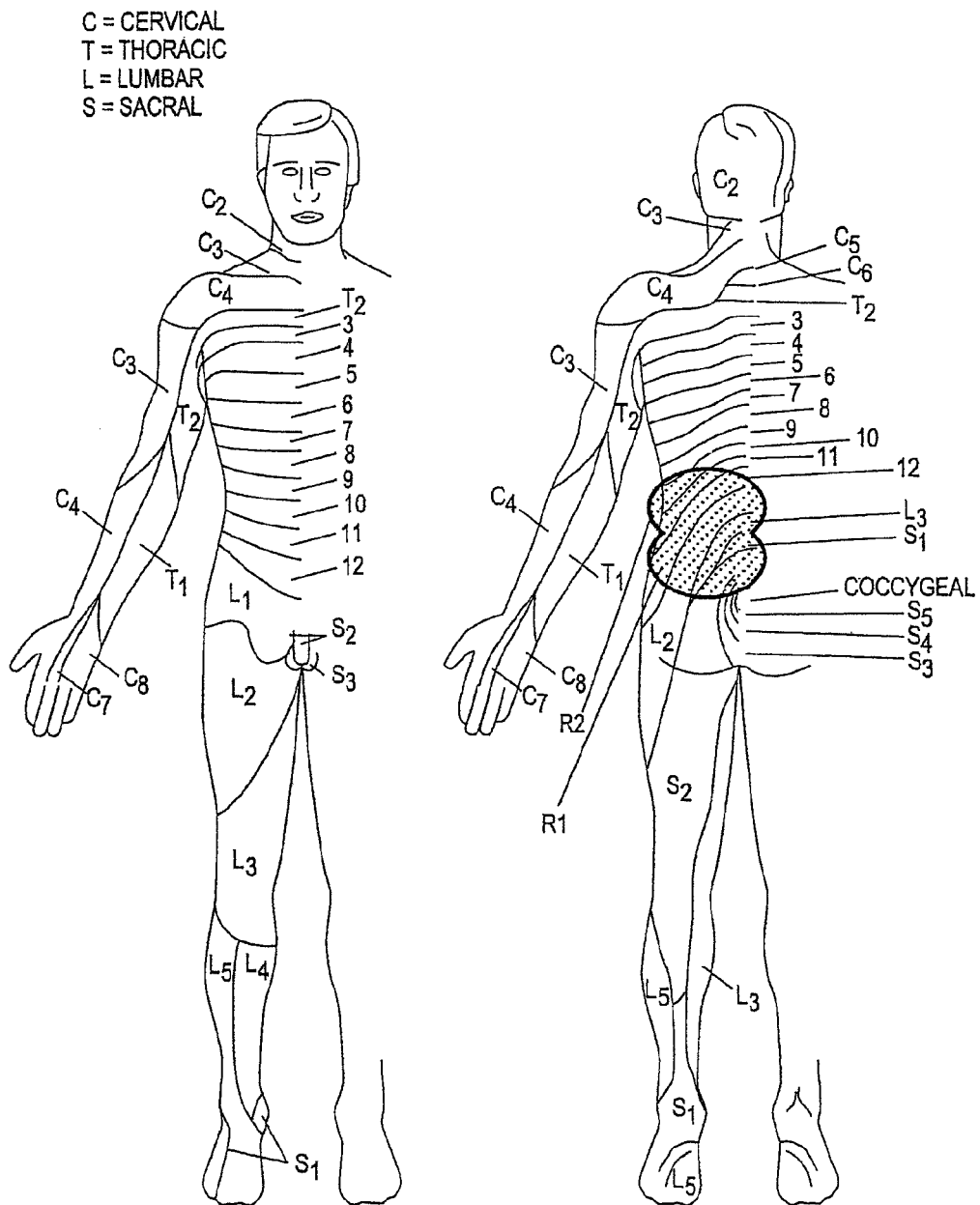
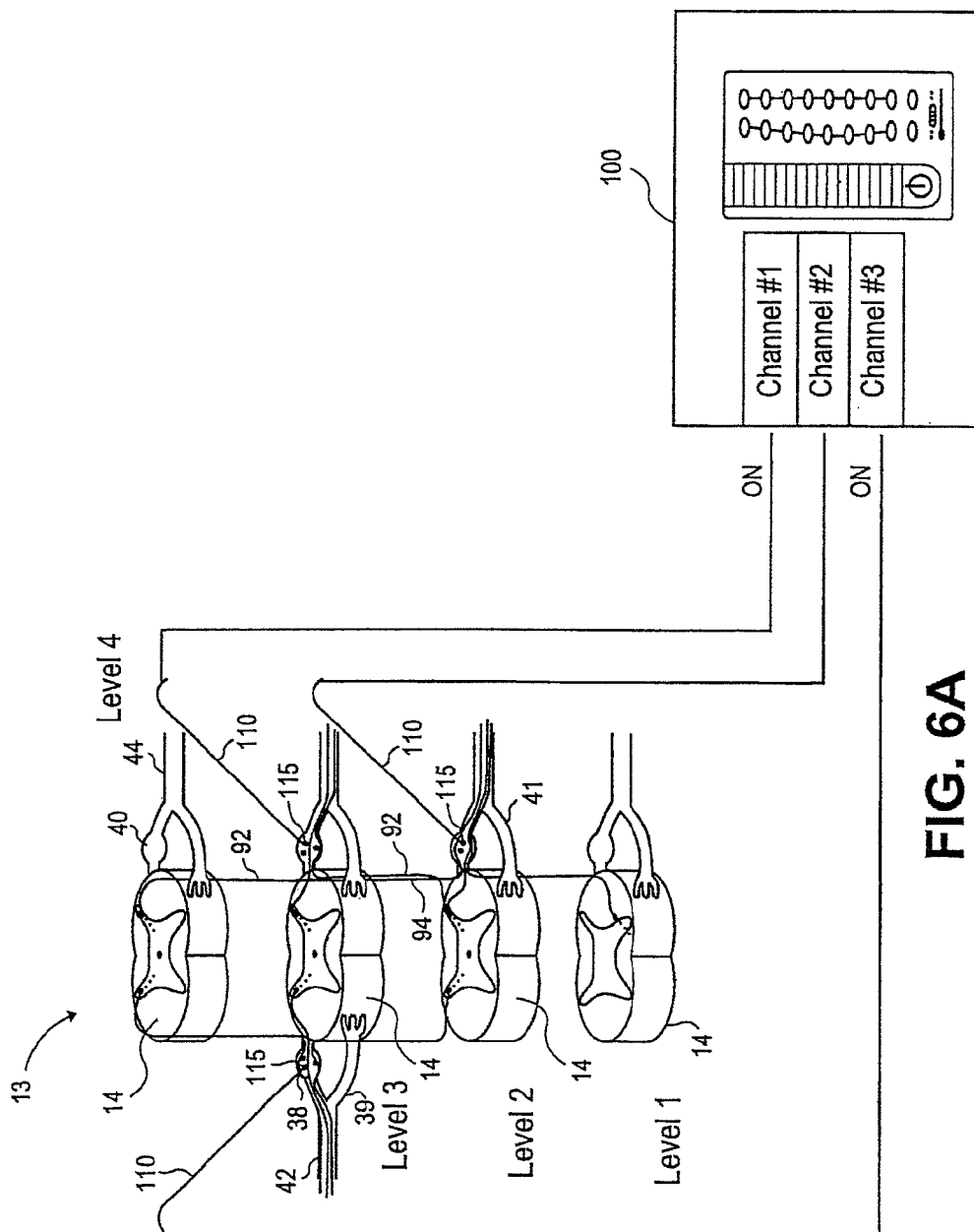


FIG. 5B



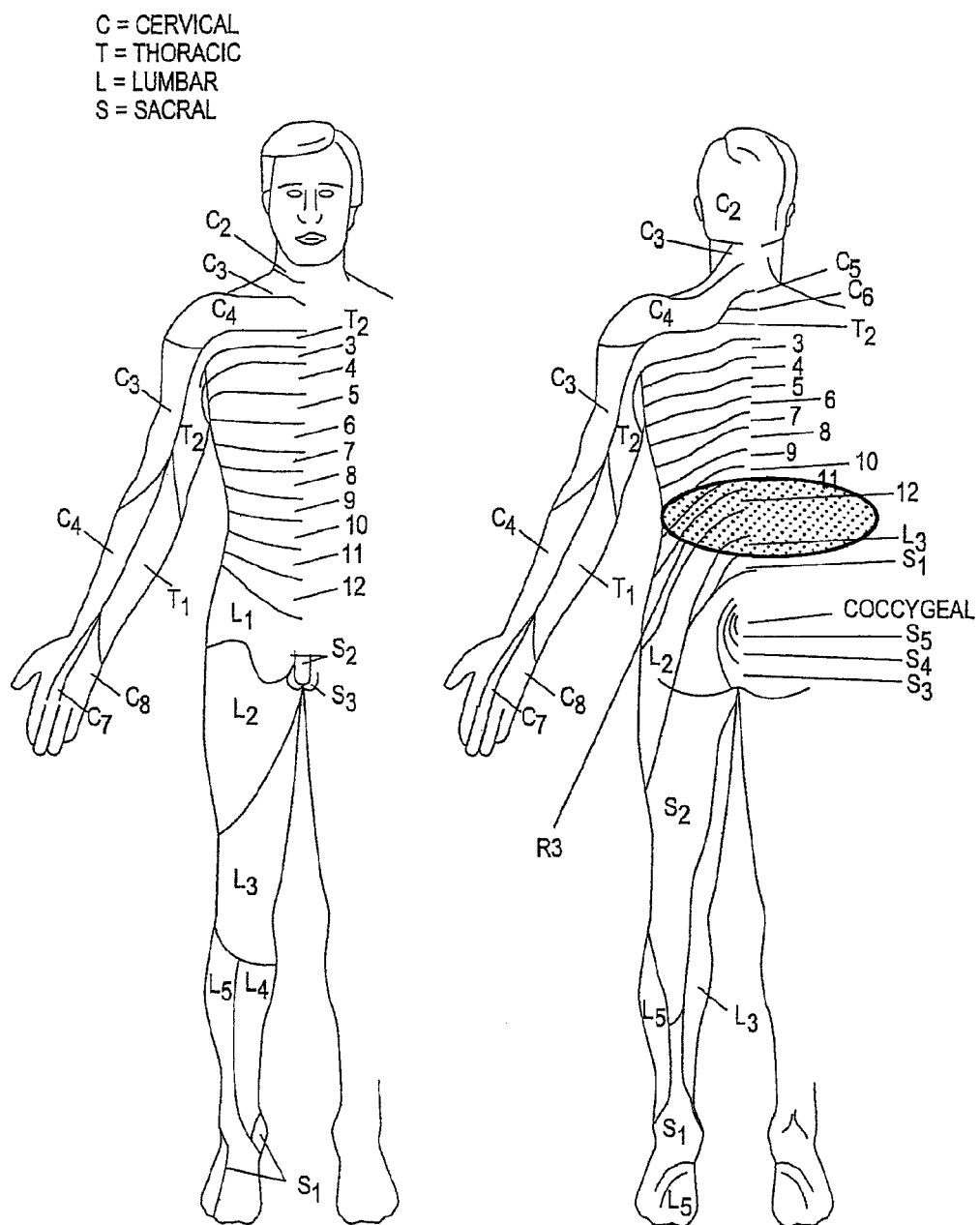


FIG. 6B

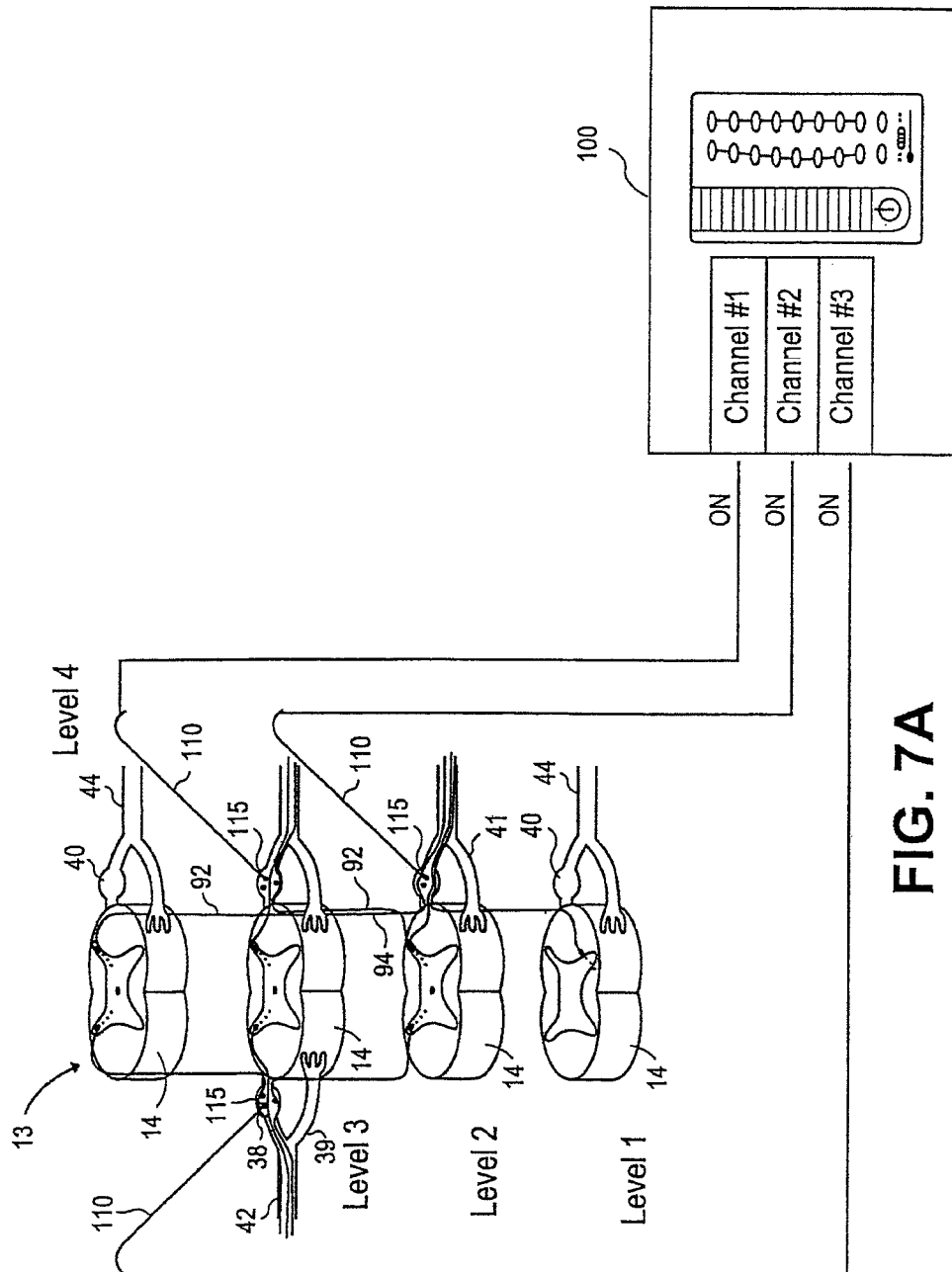


FIG. 7A

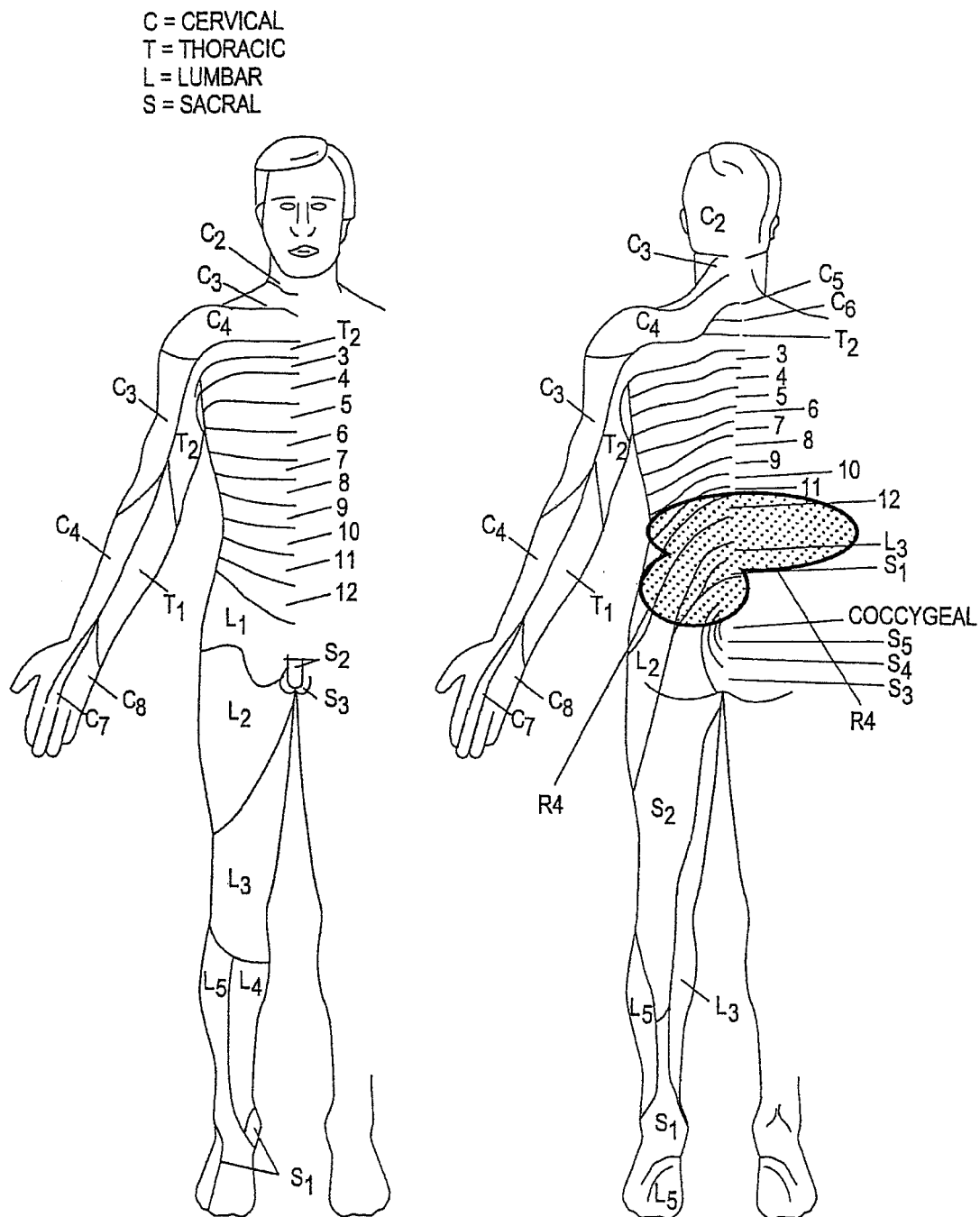


FIG. 7B

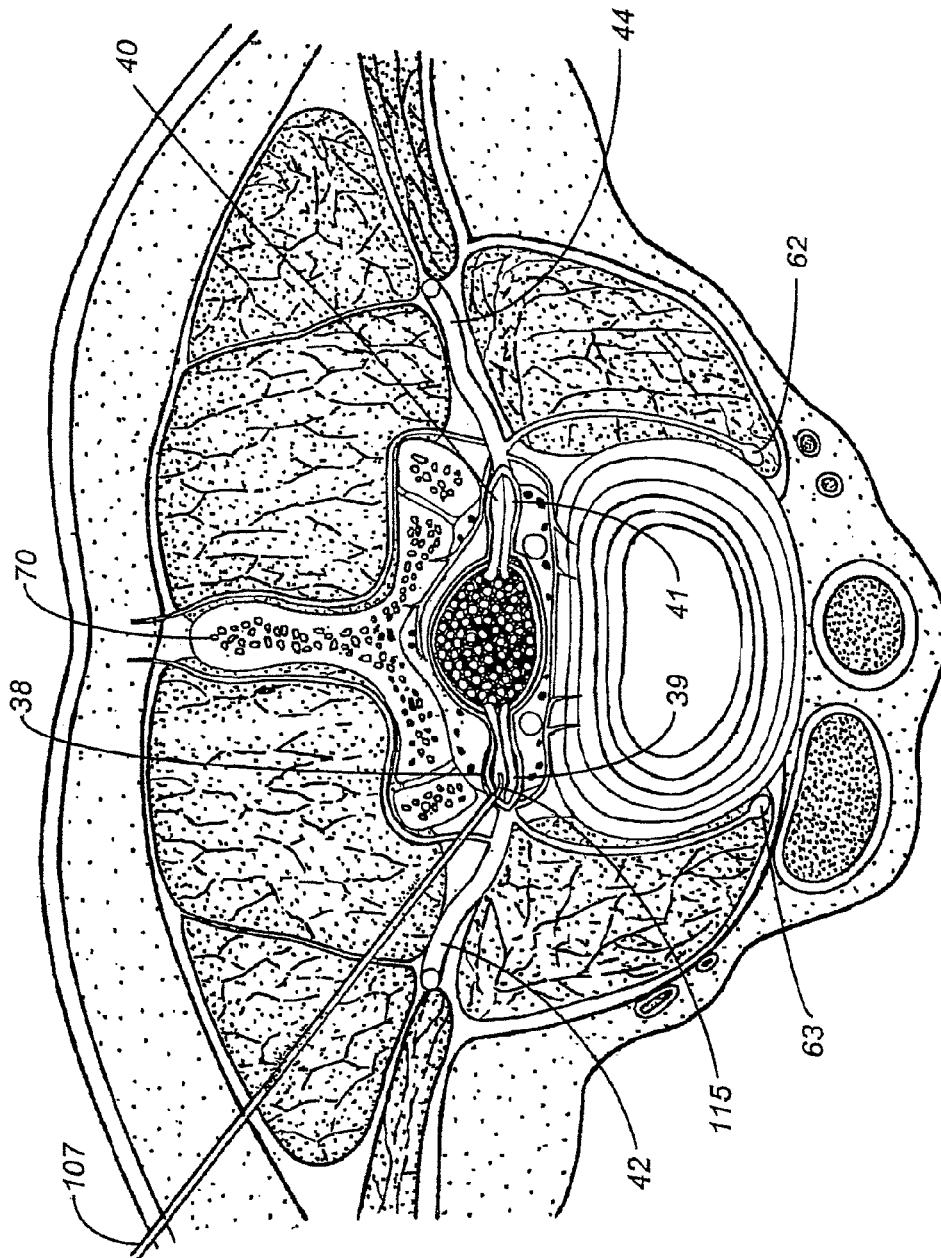


FIG. 8A

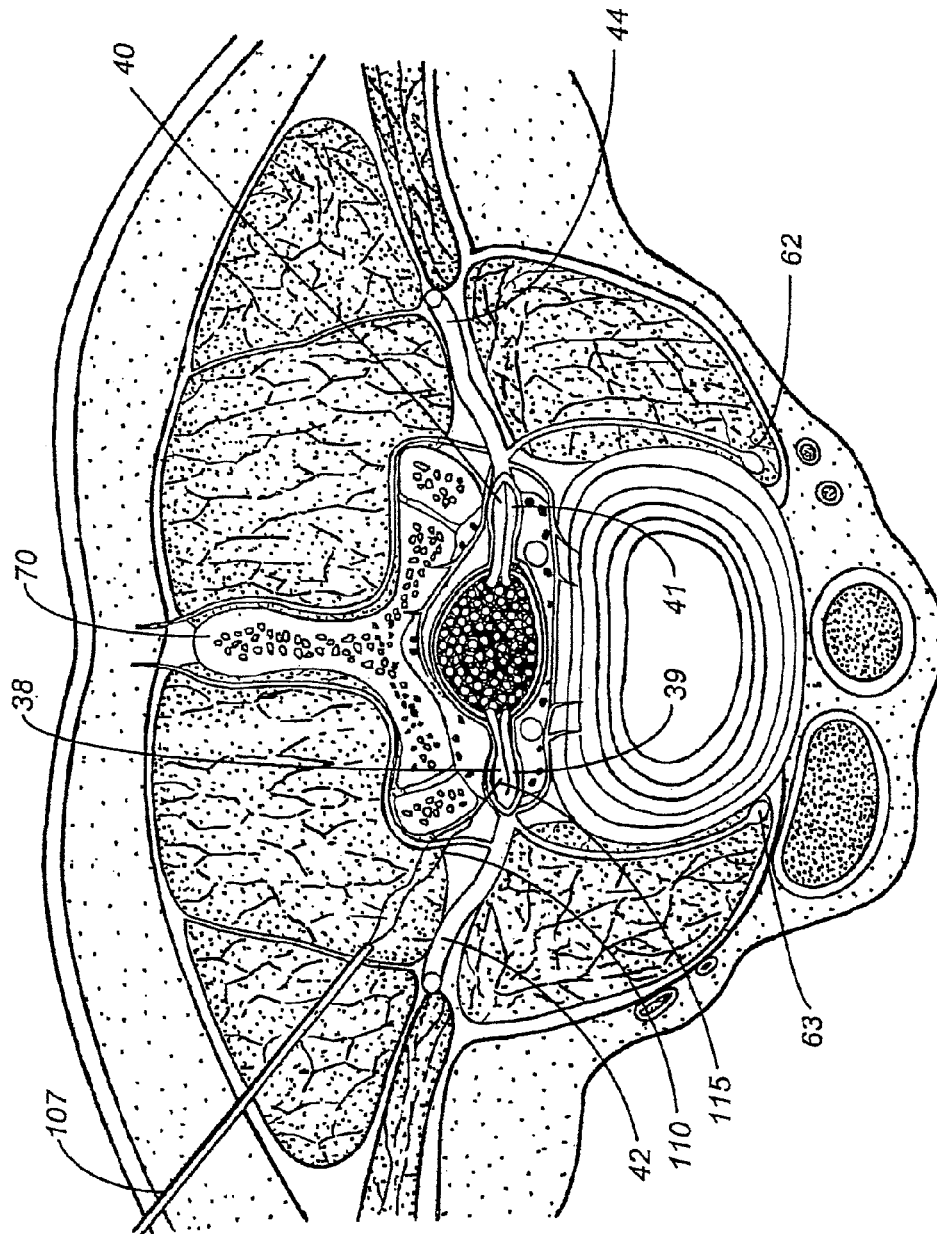


FIG. 8B

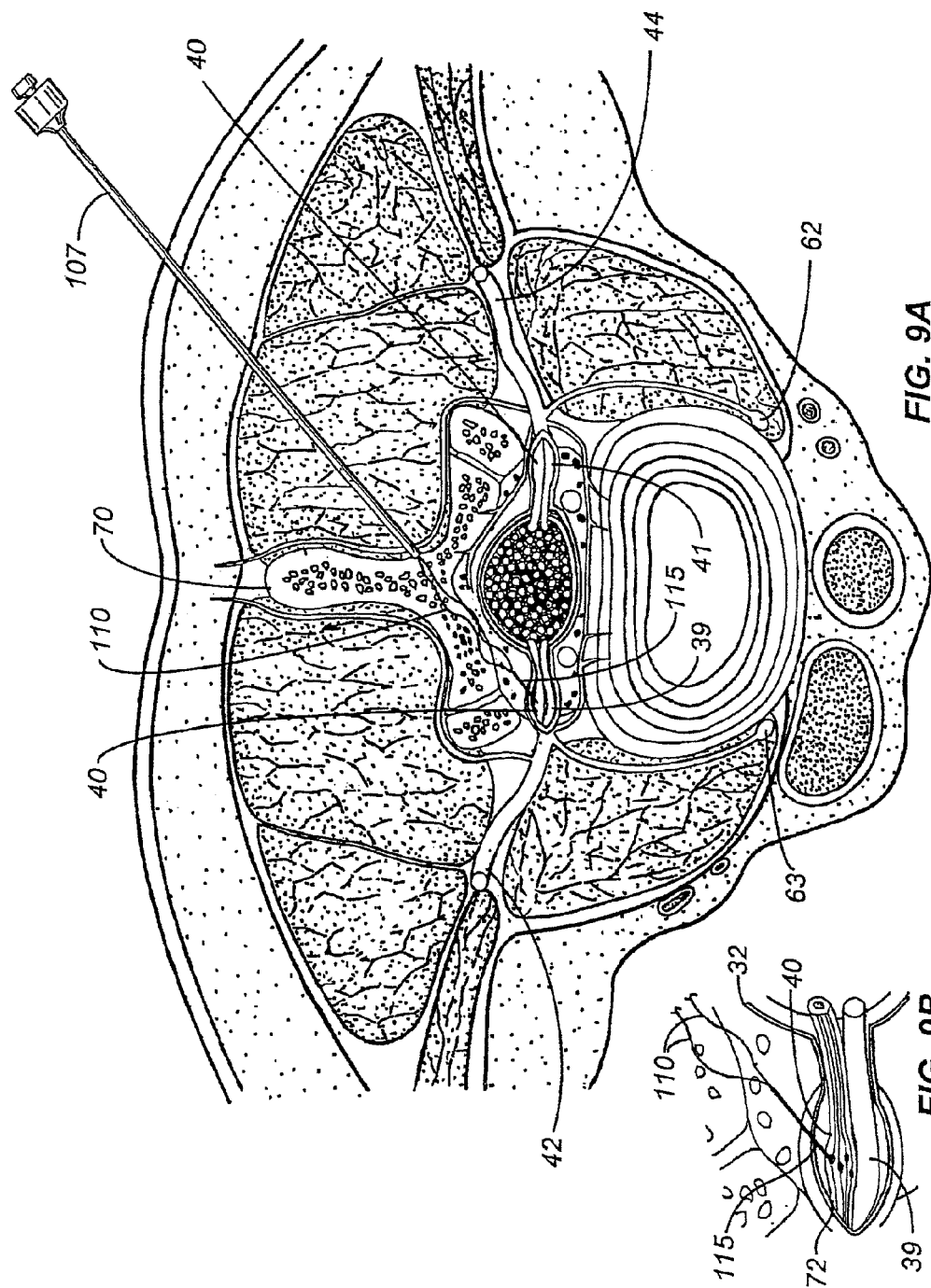


FIG. 9A

FIG. 9B

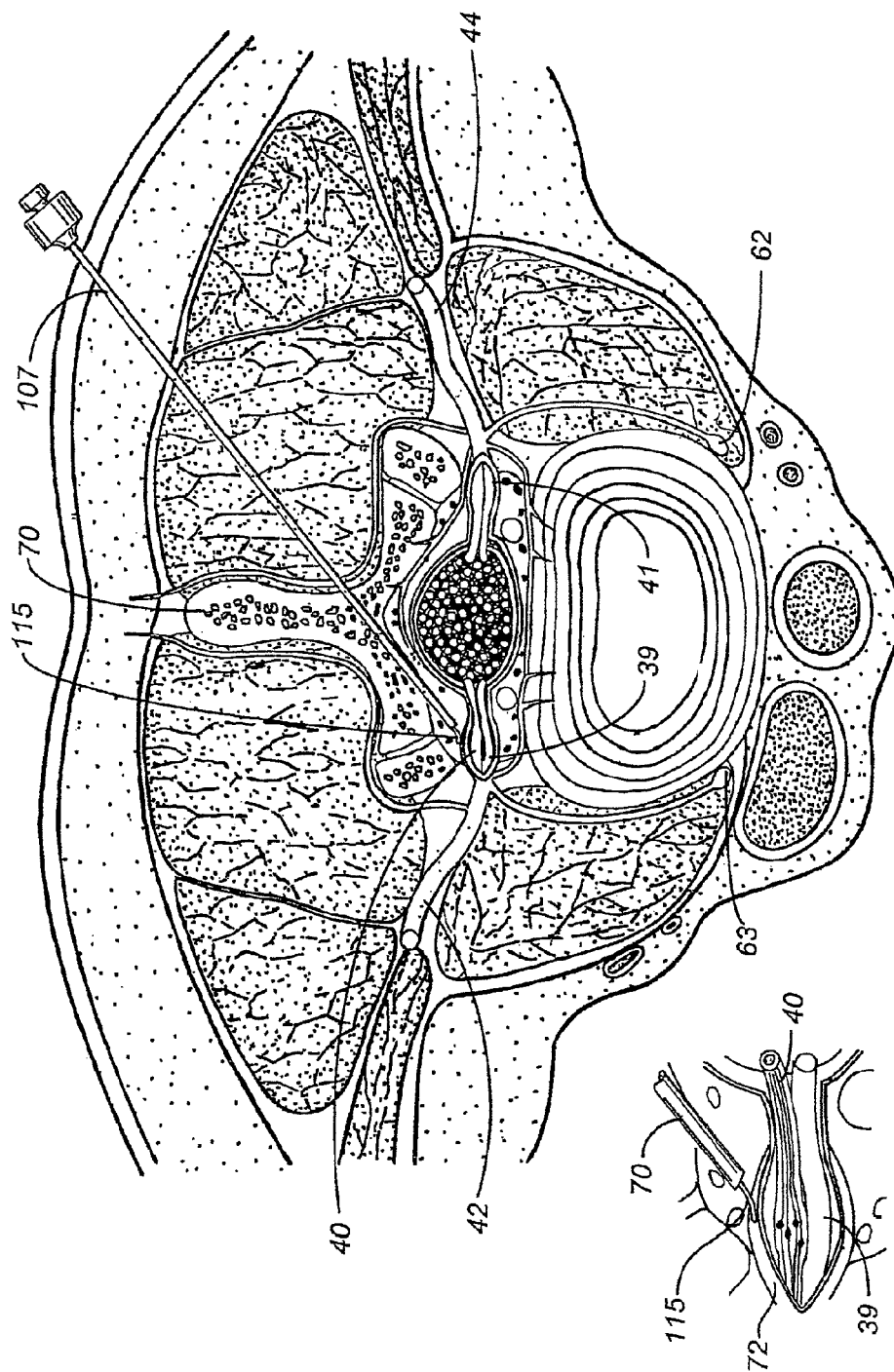
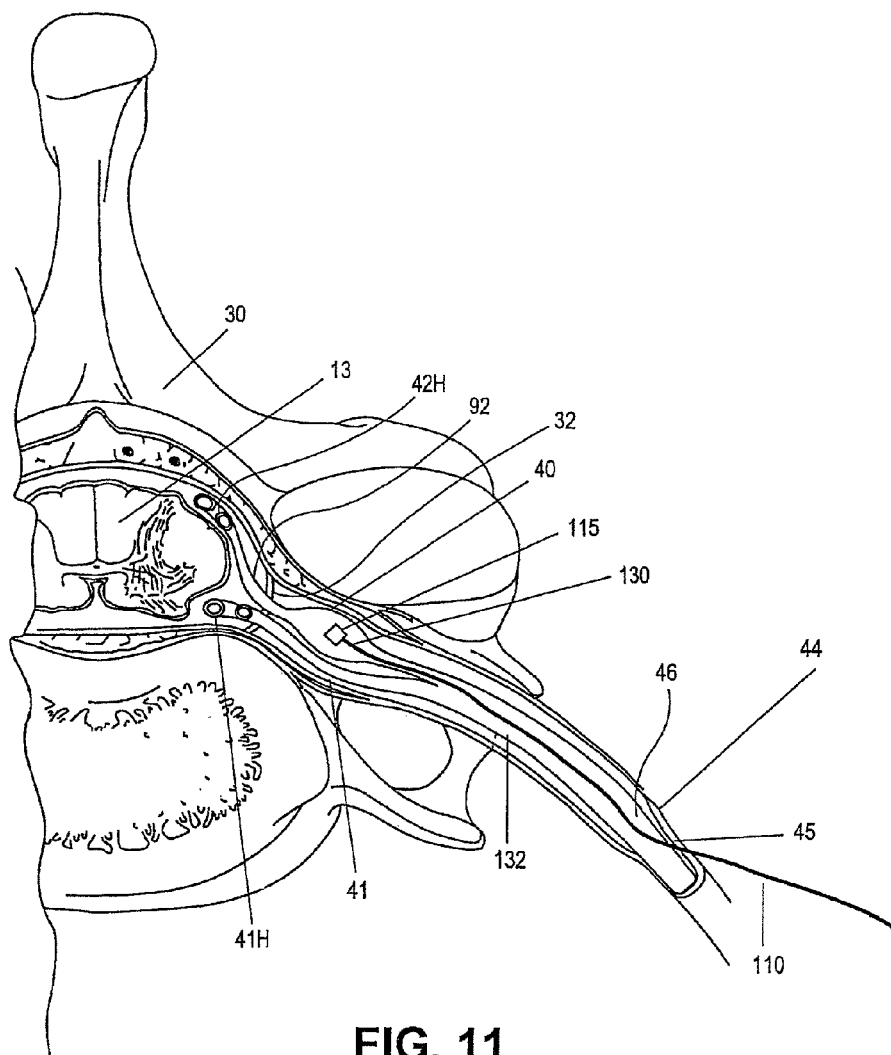


FIG. 10A

FIG. 10B



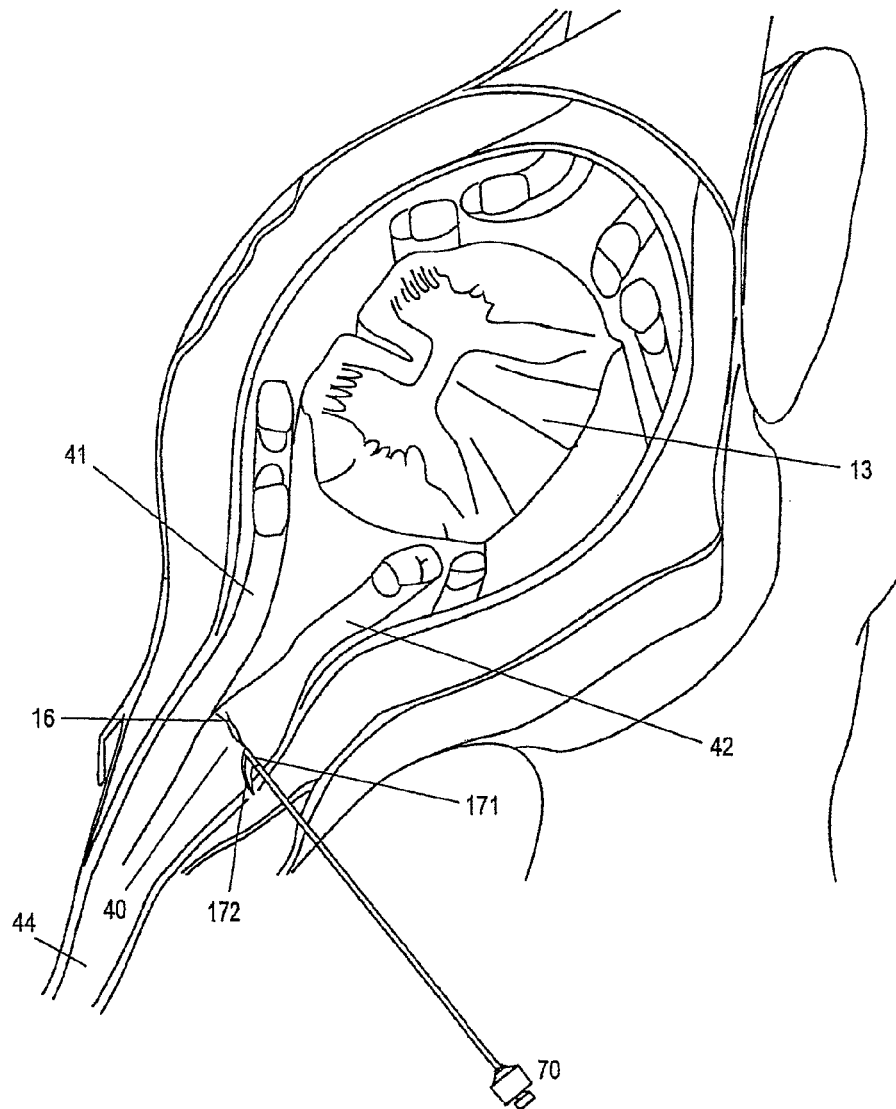


FIG. 12A

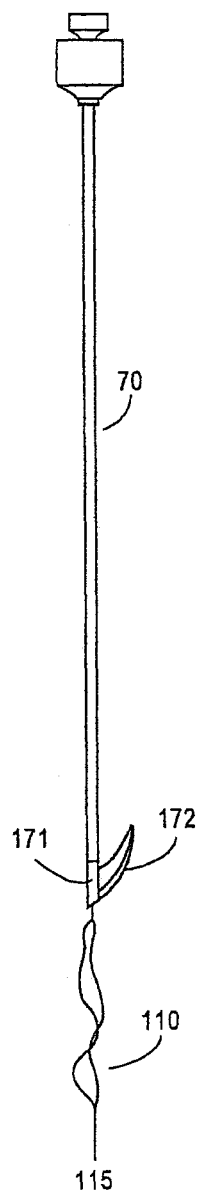


FIG. 12B

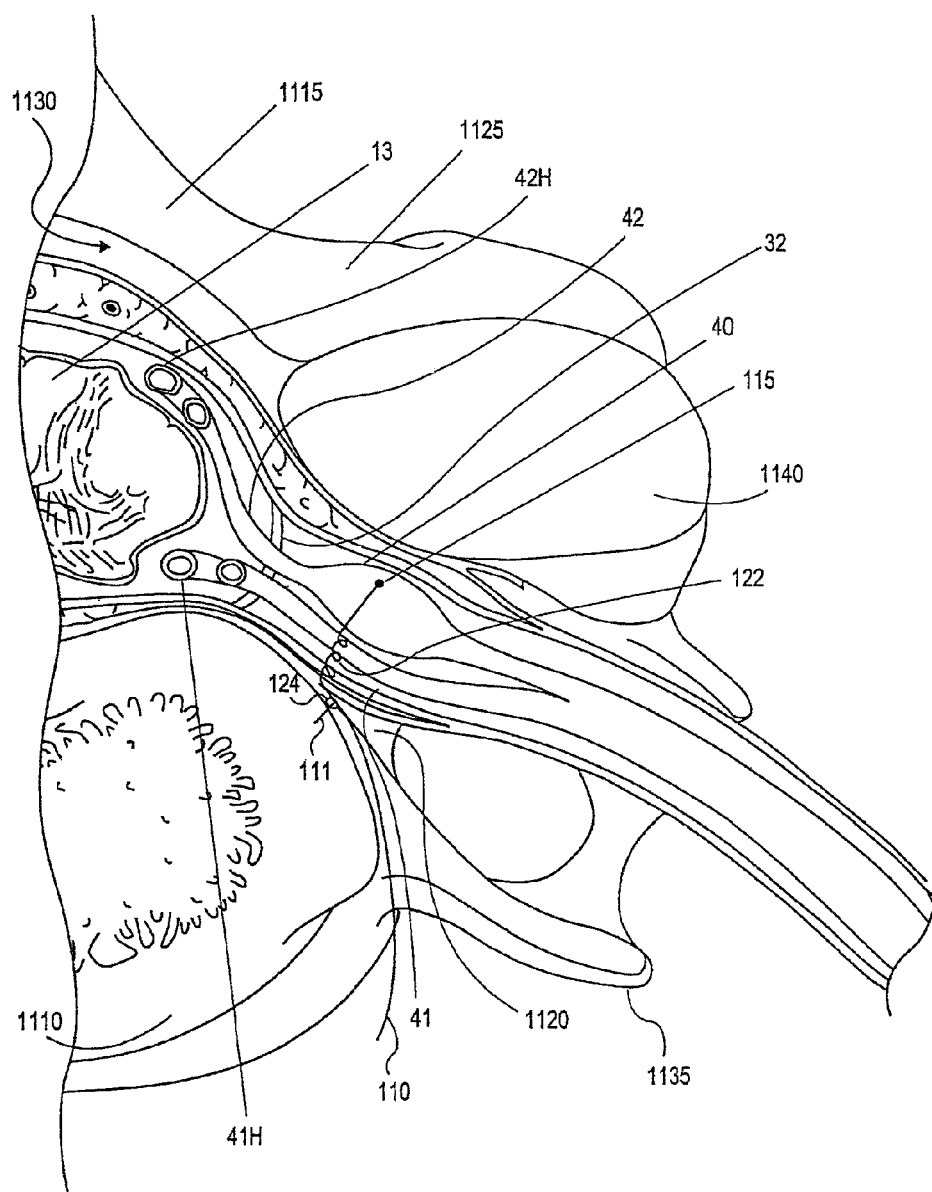
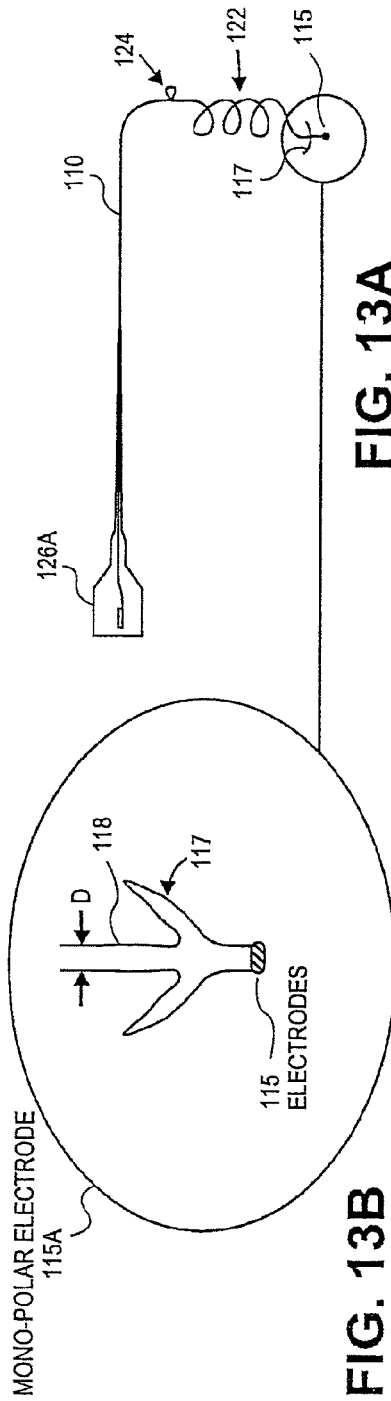
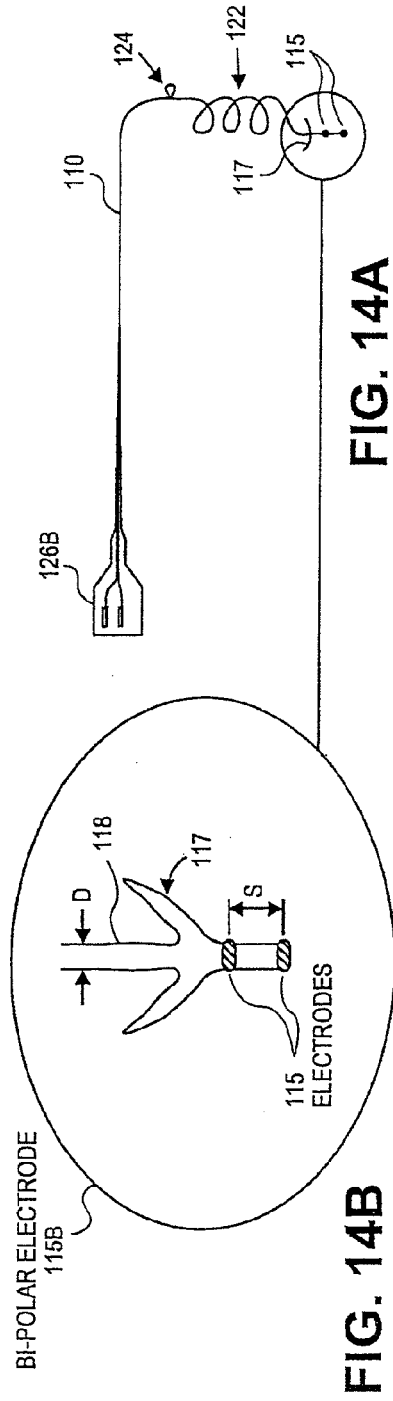
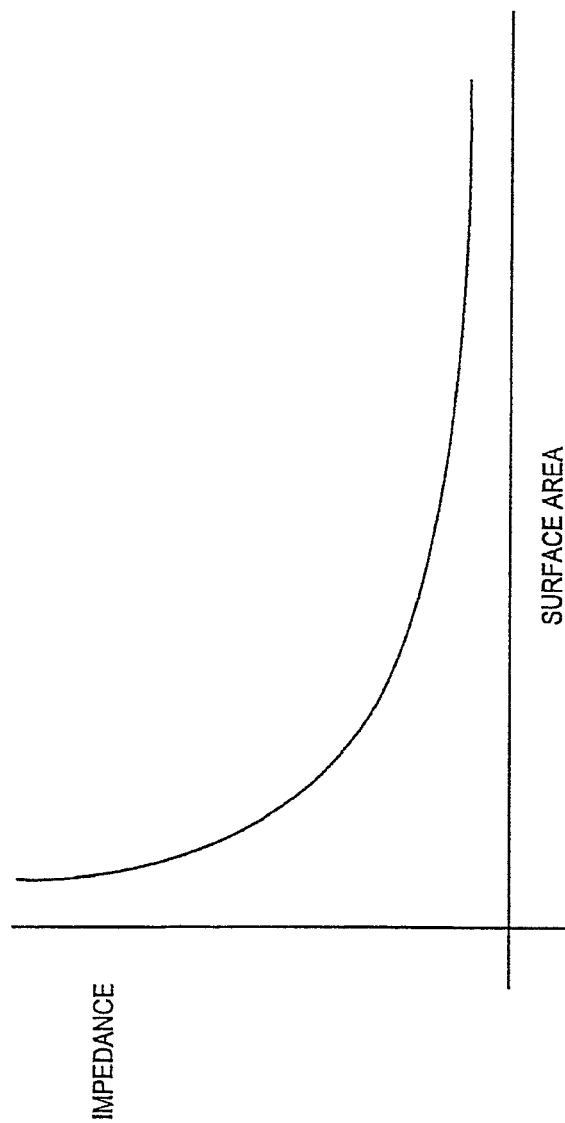


FIG. 12C





IMPEDANCE VS. ELECTRODE SURFACE AREA

FIG. 15A

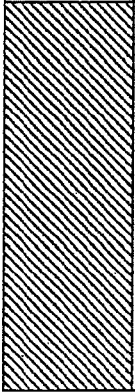
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	Wire diameter (mm)	Electrode Area (mm ²)	Electrode Area (mm ²)	
	0.25	0.20	0.39	
	0.381	0.30	0.60	
	0.5	0.39	0.79	
	0.75	0.59	1.18	
	1	0.79	1.57	

FIG. 15B

FIG. 16

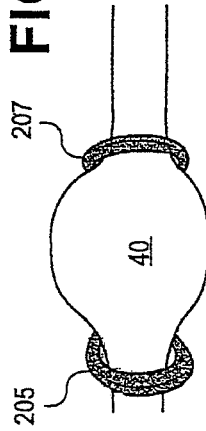


FIG. 17

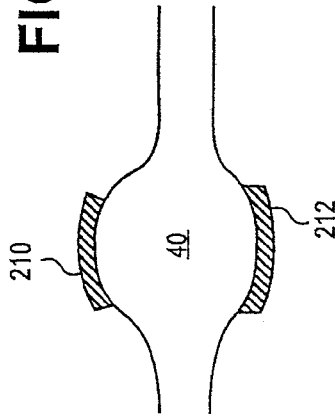


FIG. 18

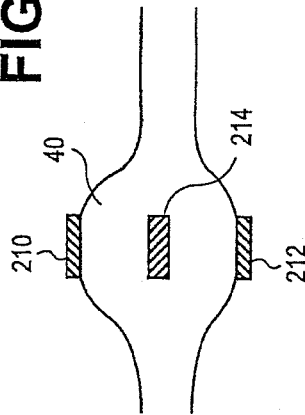


FIG. 20

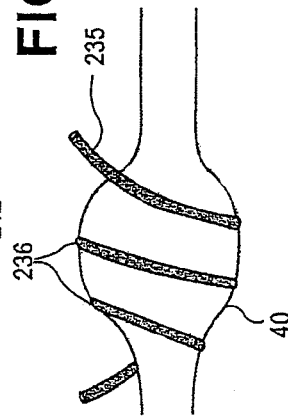
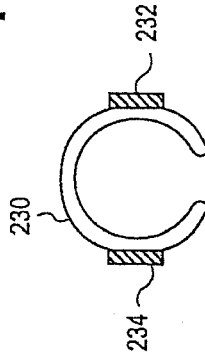


FIG. 19



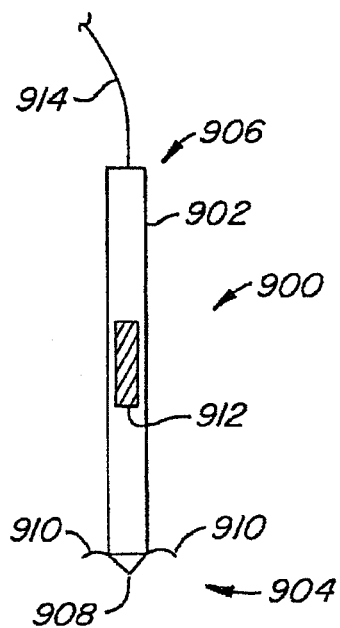


FIG. 20A

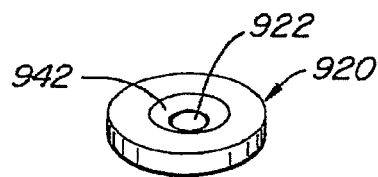


FIG. 20B

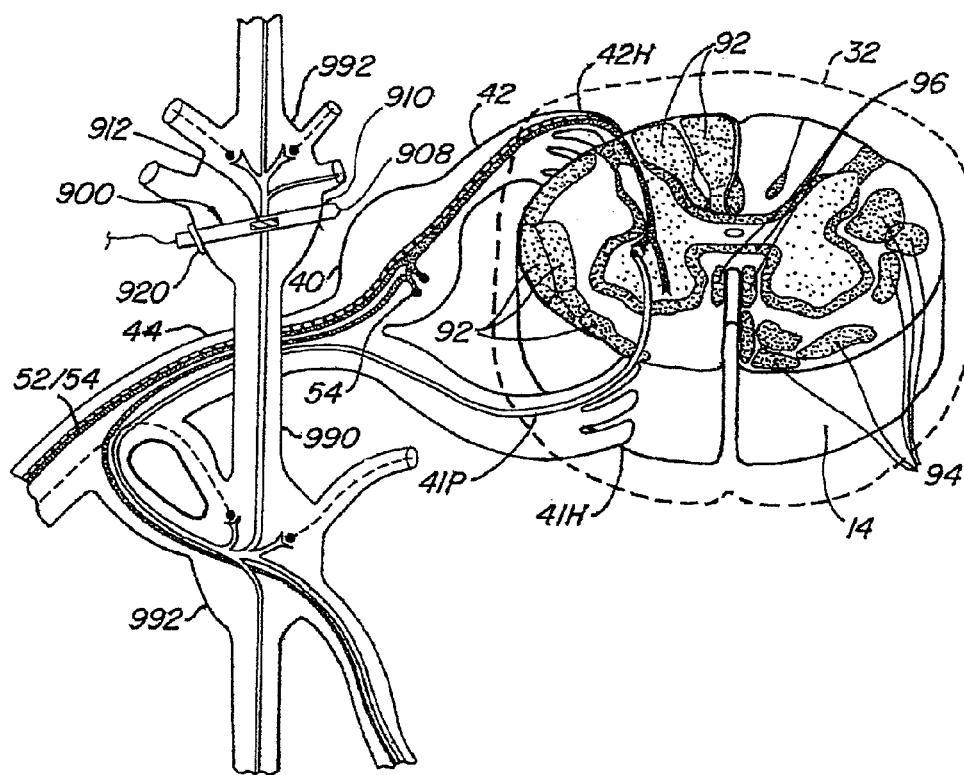


FIG. 20C

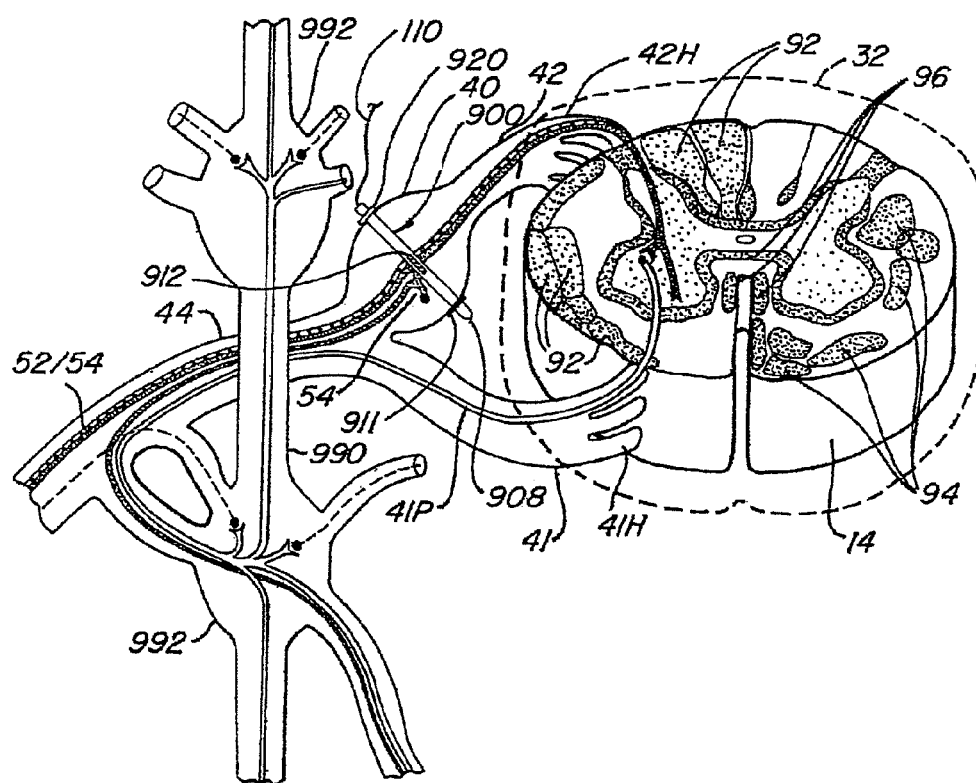


FIG. 20D

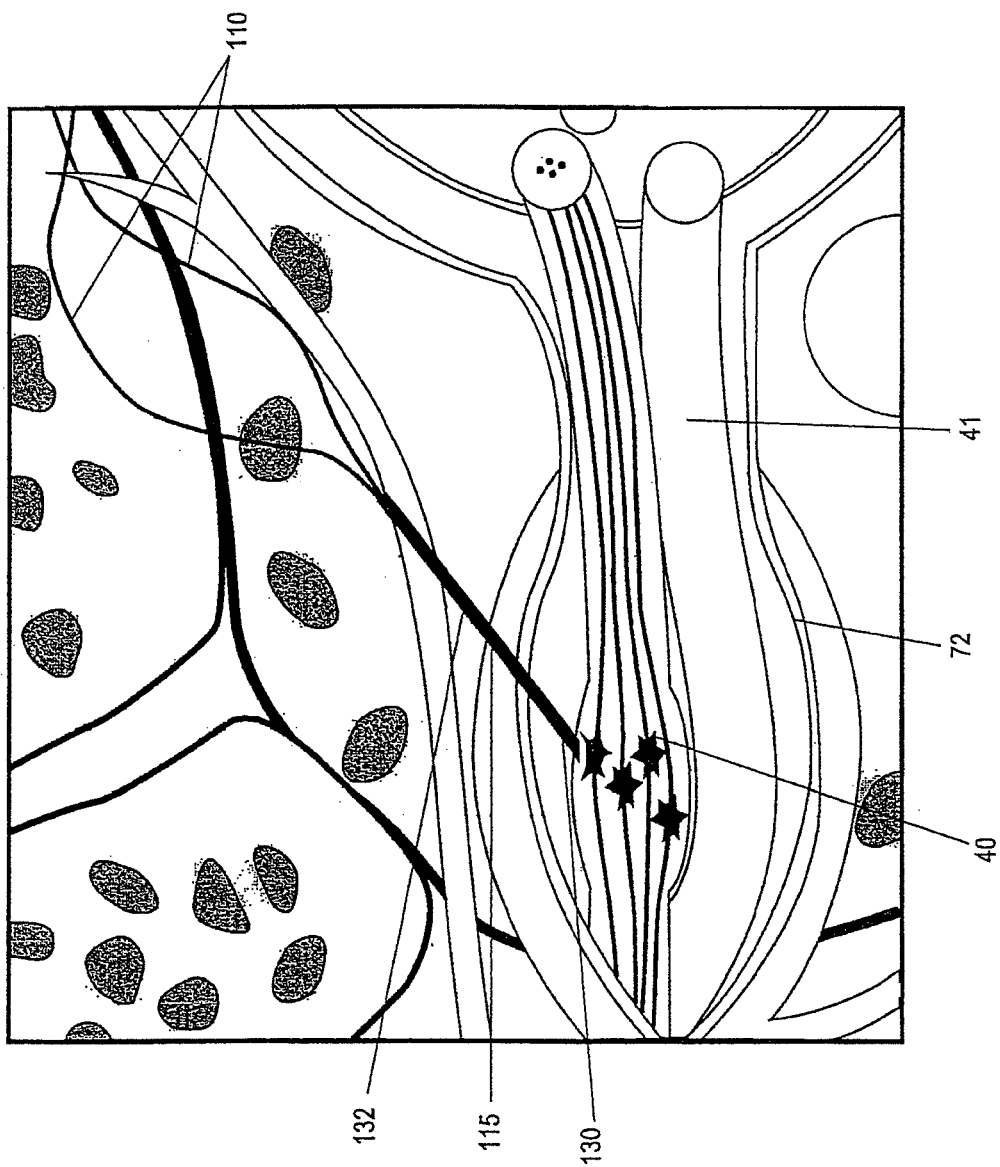
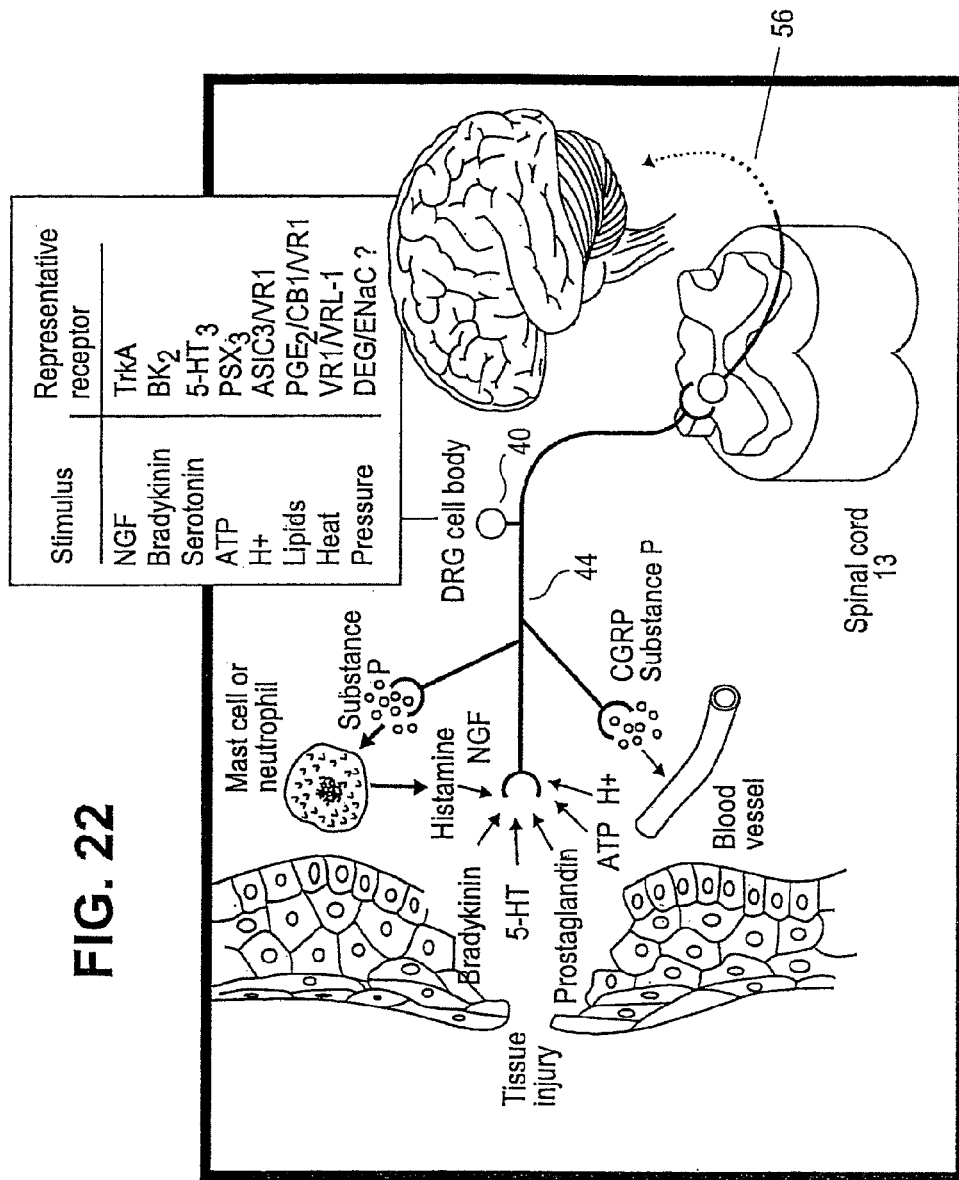
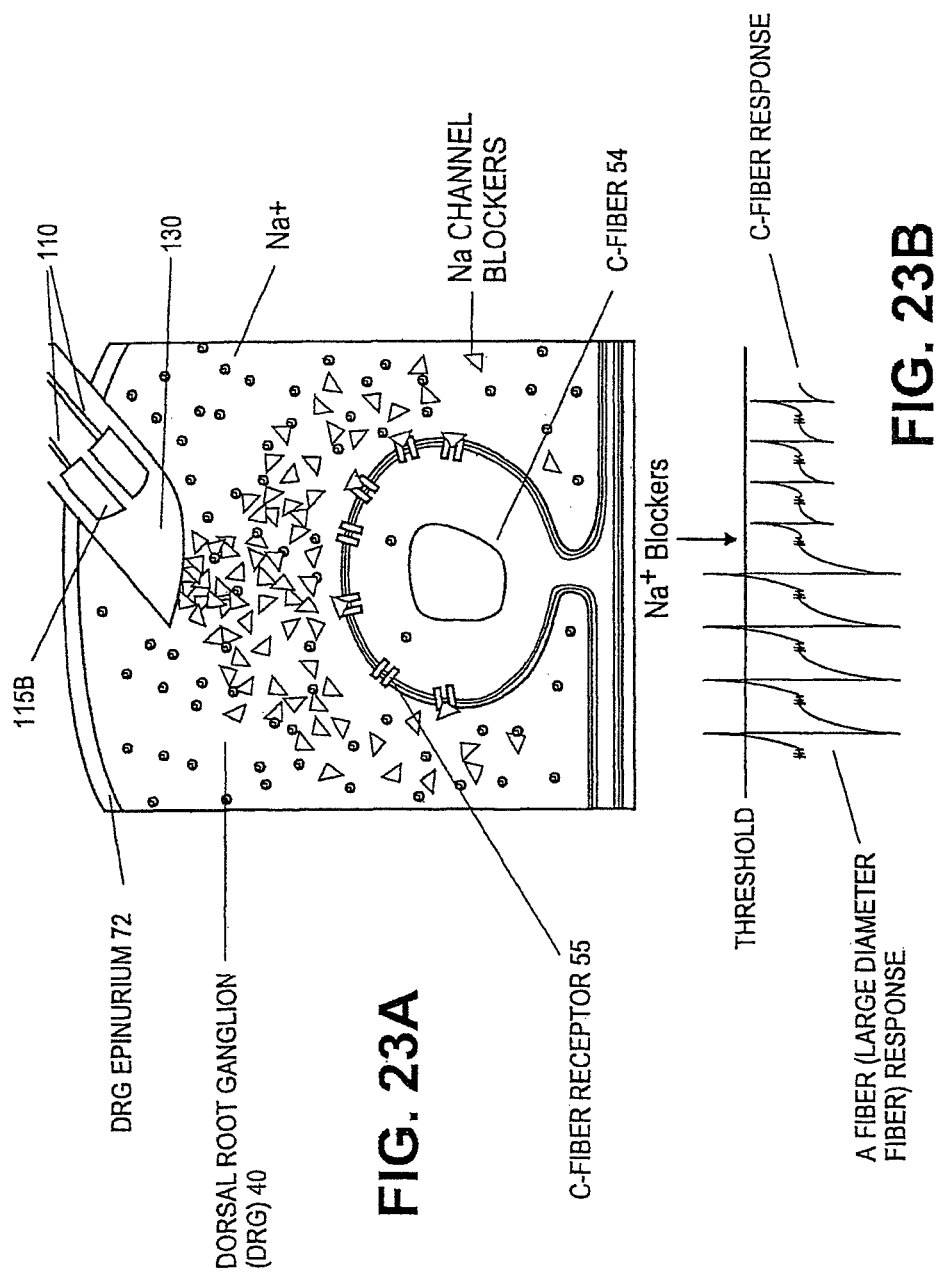


FIG. 21

FIG. 22





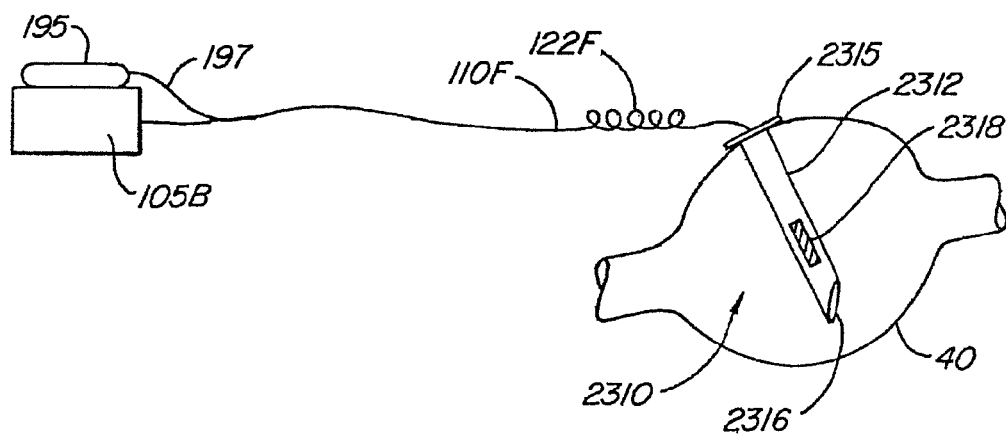


FIG. 23C

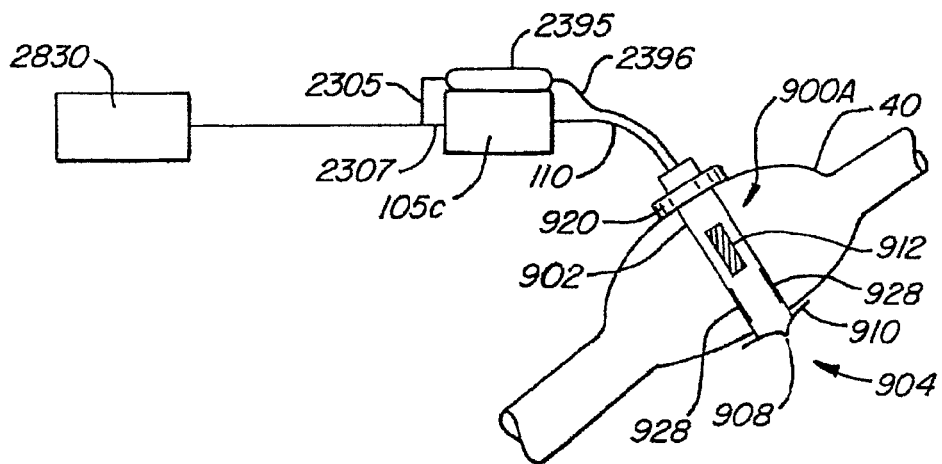


FIG. 23D

Pharmacological Agent	Pain		Neuromuscular disorders					
	Neuropathic pain	Trigeminal neuralgia	Migraine prophylaxis	Non-epileptic myoclonus	Essential tremor	Myotonia	Myokymia (Isaacs' syndrome)	RLS Dystonia
Phenytoin	○	●				●	●	●
Carbamazepine	●	●				●	○	●
Oxcarbazepine	●	○						
Lamotrigine	●	●	○					
Zonisamide	○		○					
Valproate	○	○	●	●				
Topiramate	○	○	●	●				
Gabapentin	●	○	●	○	●		○	
Levetiracetam	●		○	●				
Phenobarbital					●			
Primidone					●			
Benzodiazepines	●	●		●	●			●
Vigabatrin								
Tiagabine	●		●					

FIG. 24

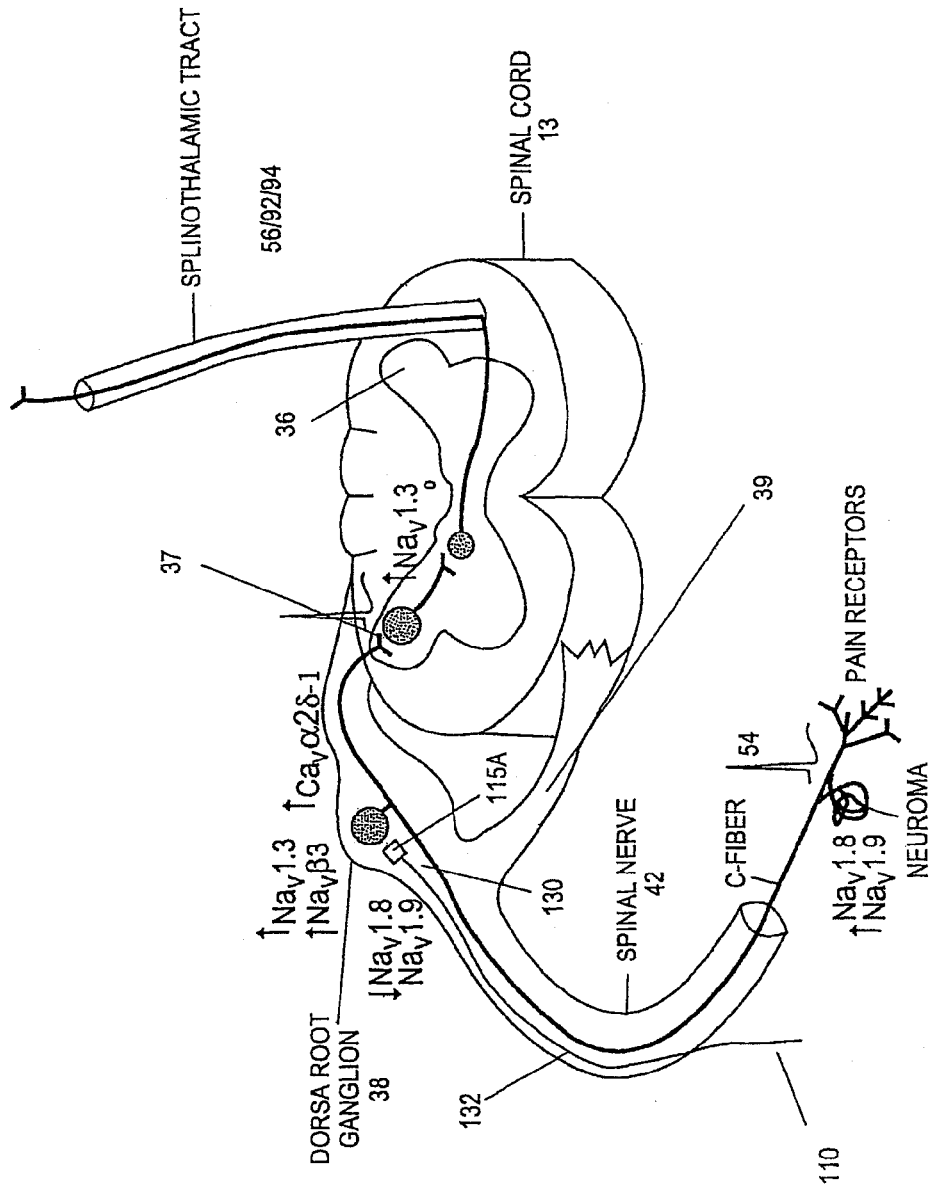


FIG. 25

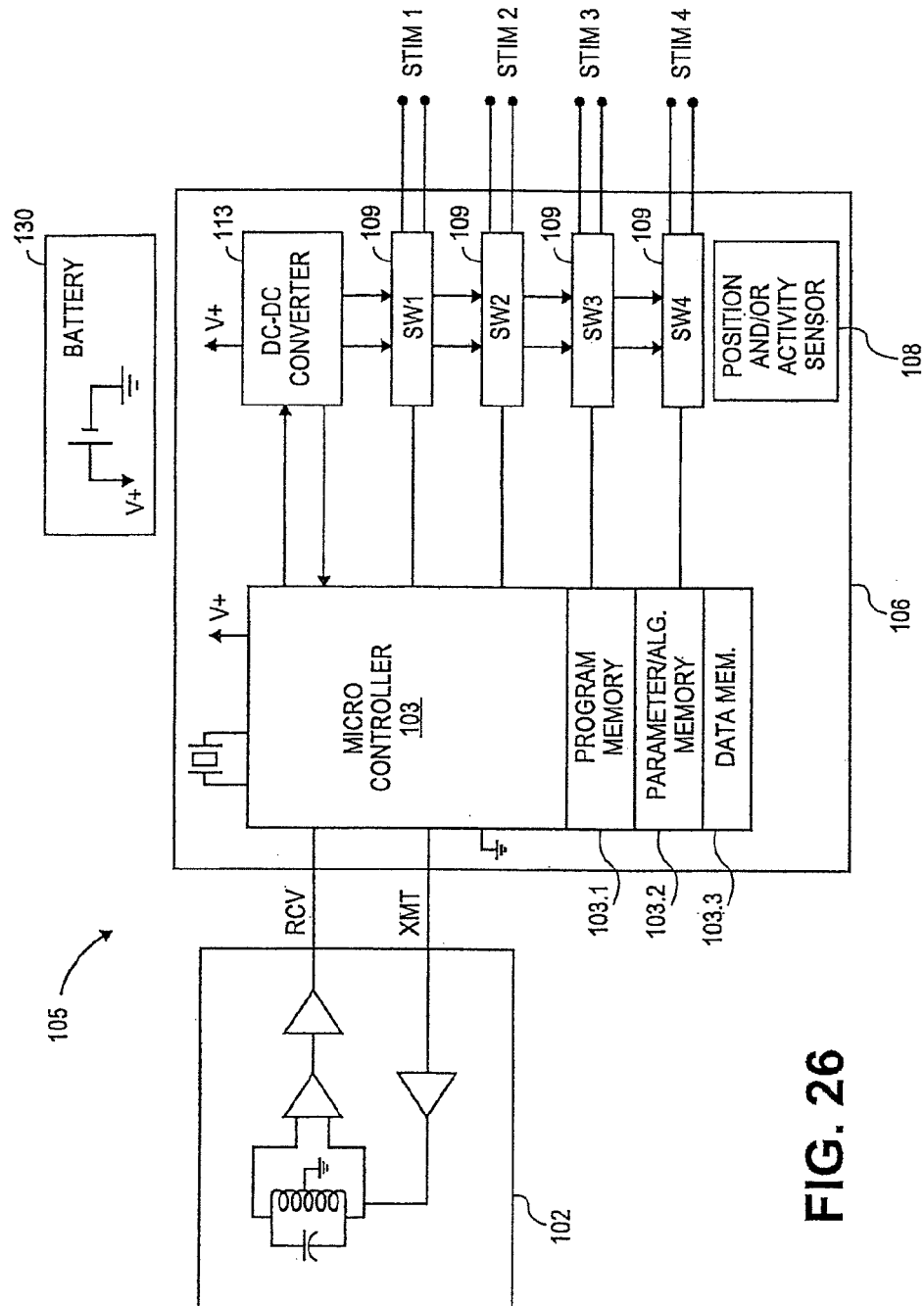


FIG. 26

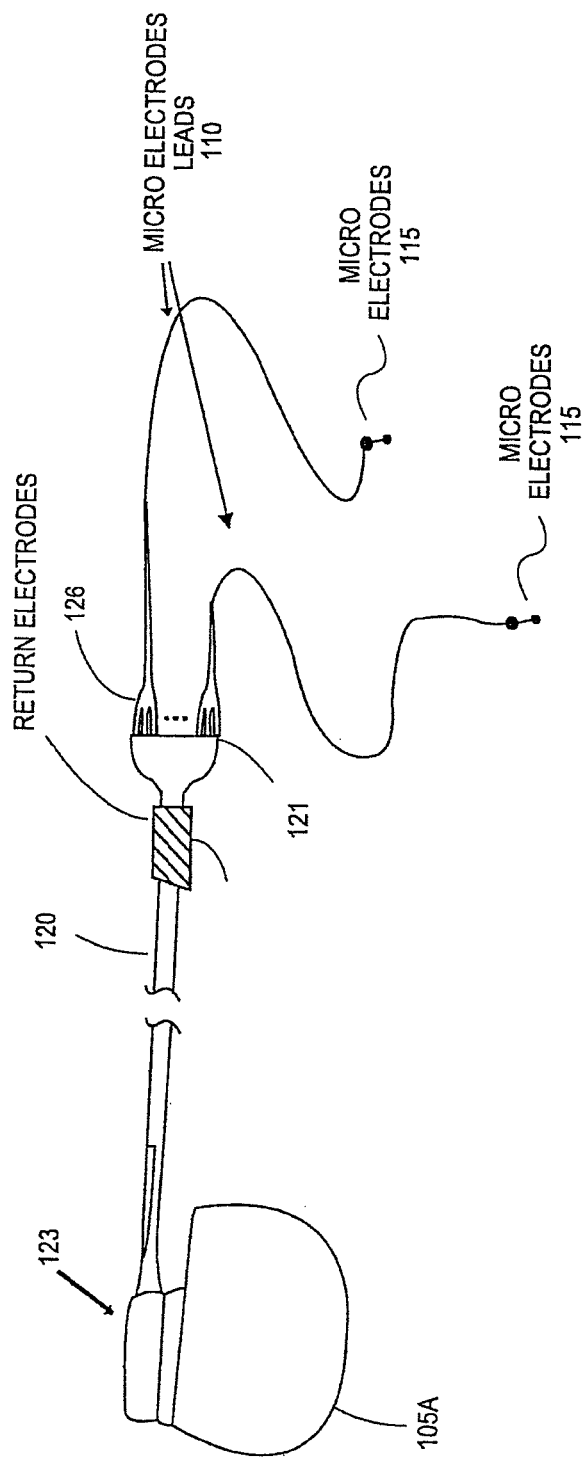


FIG. 27

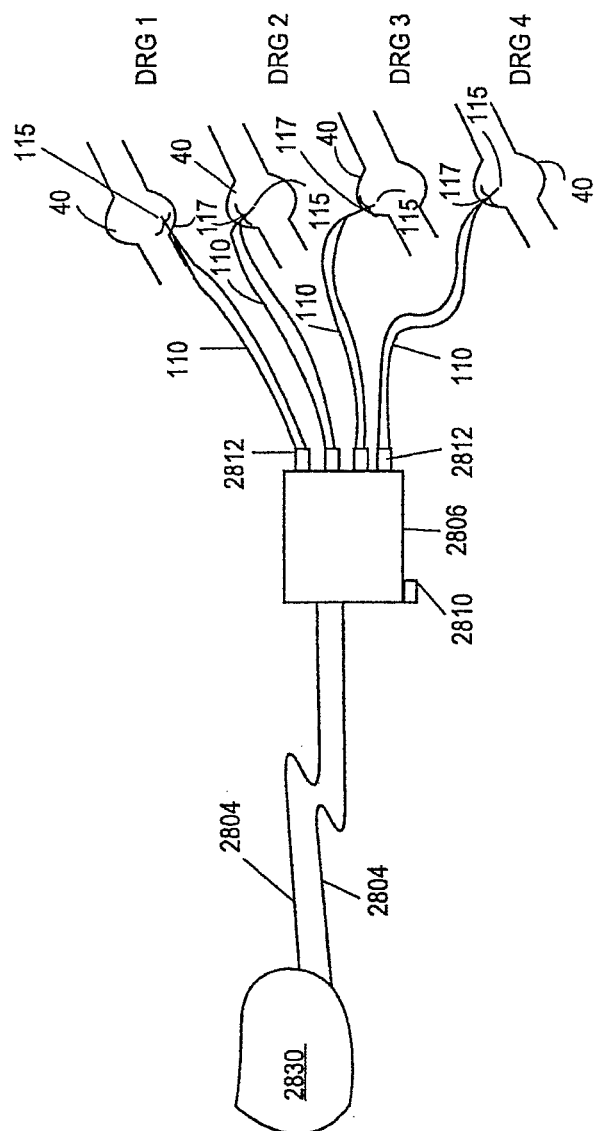


FIG. 28

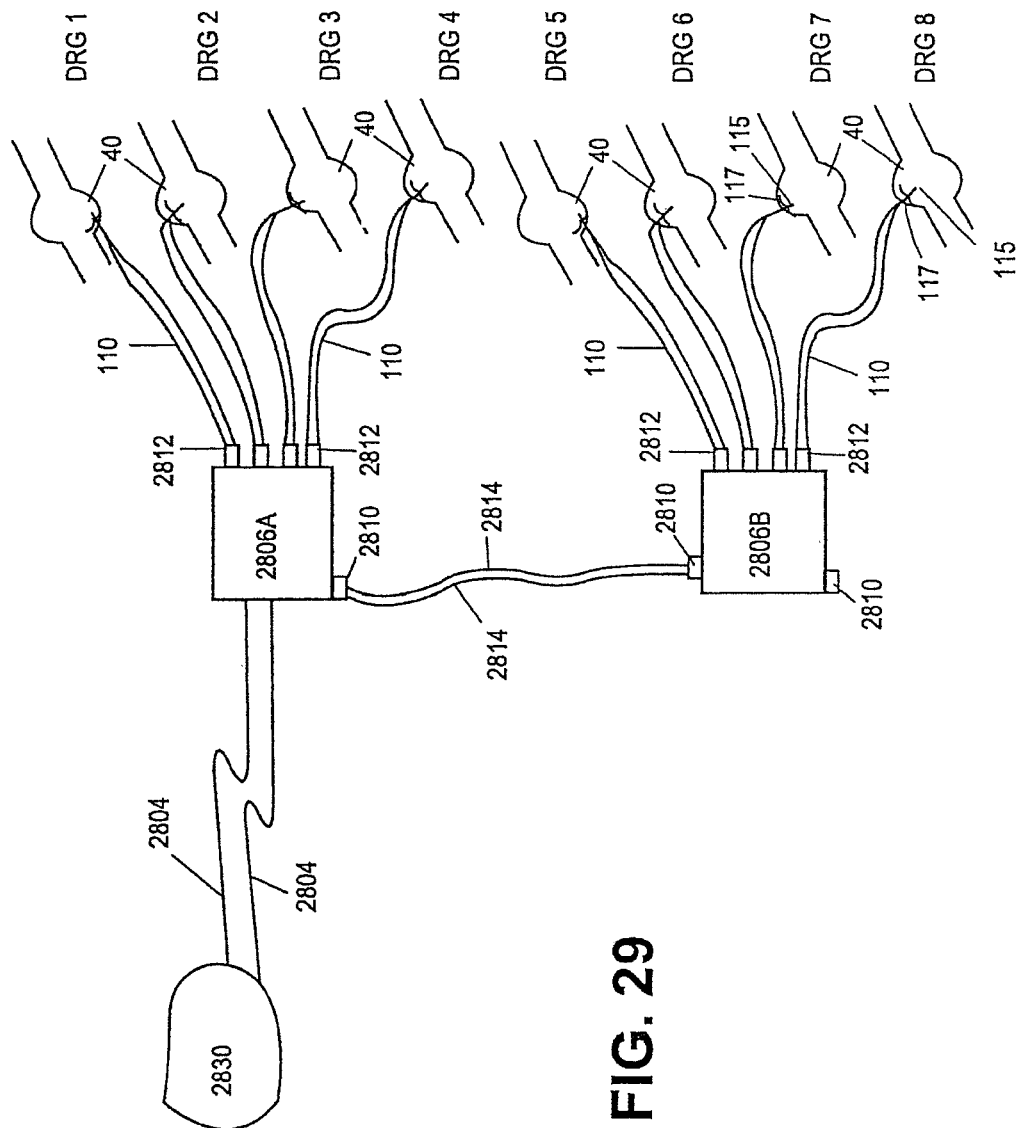


FIG. 29

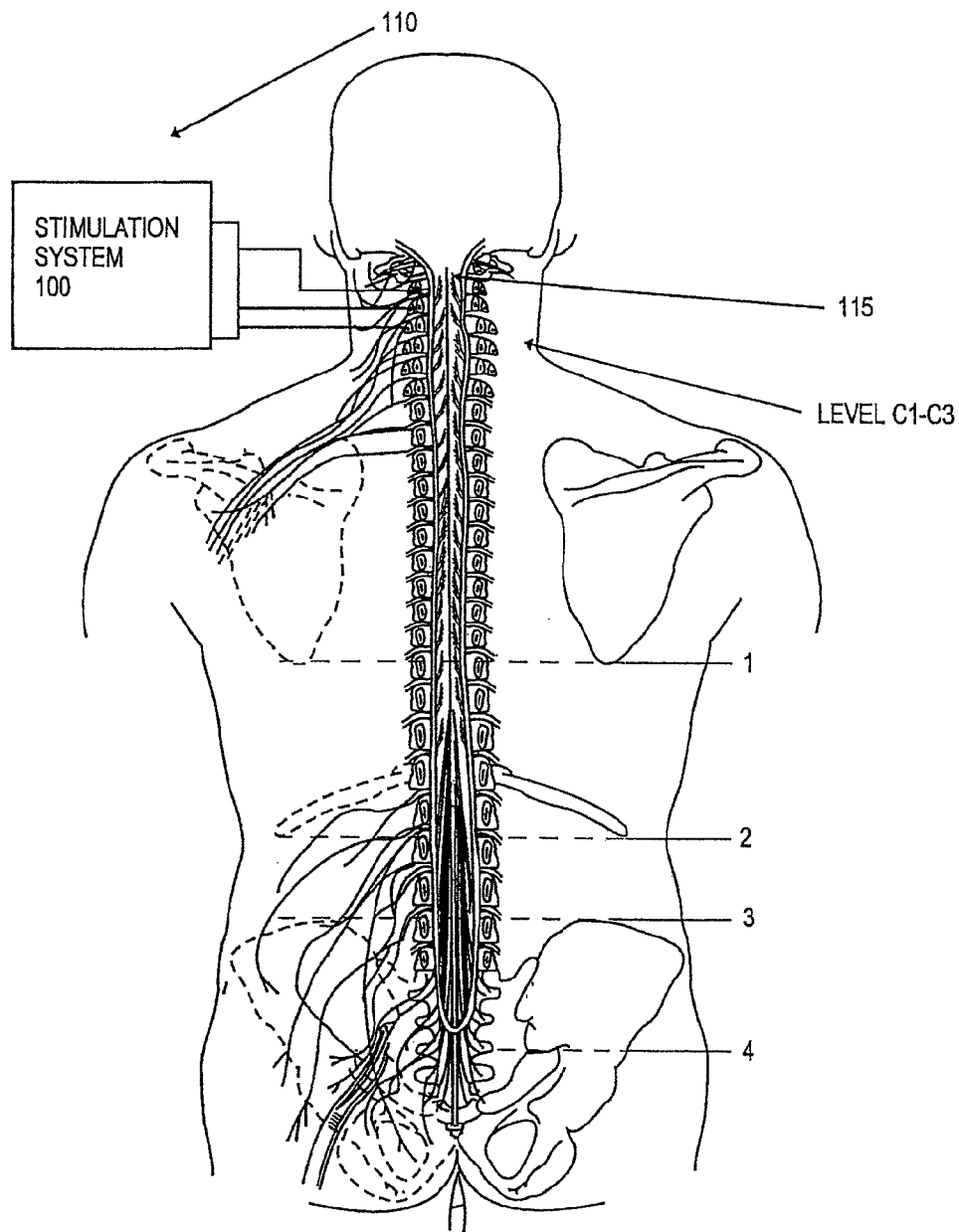


FIG. 30

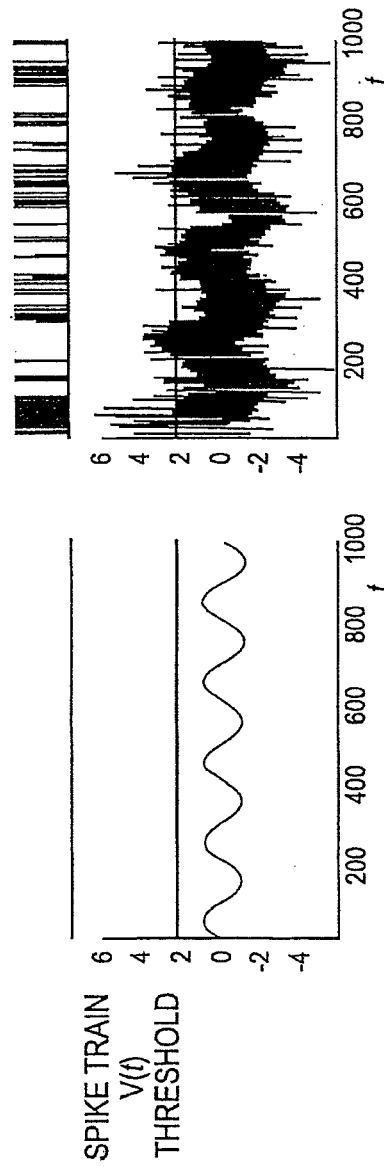


FIG. 31A

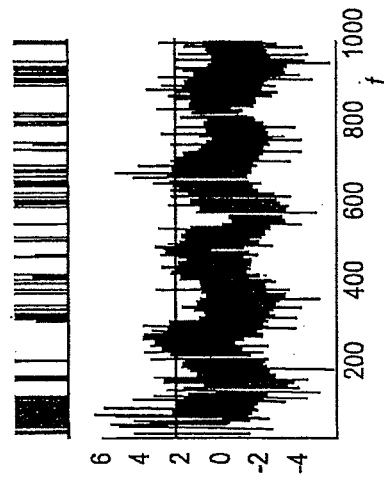


FIG. 31B

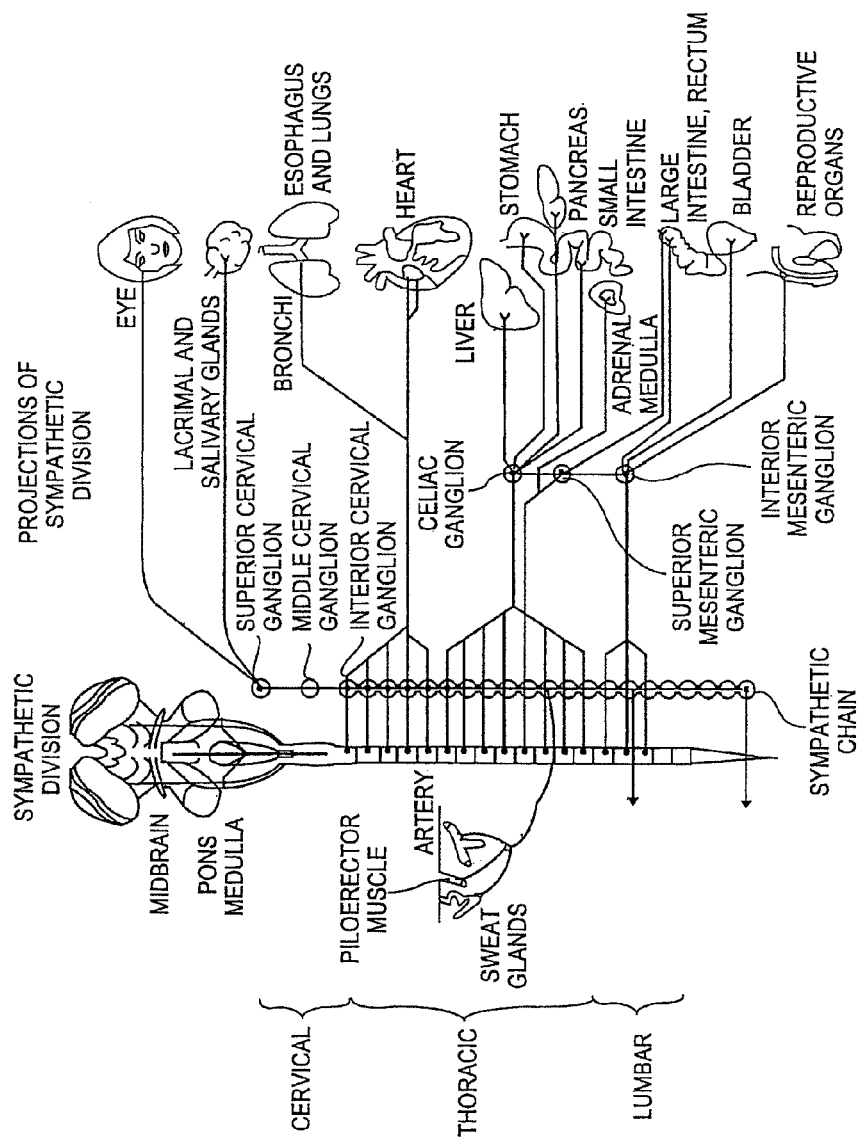


FIG. 32

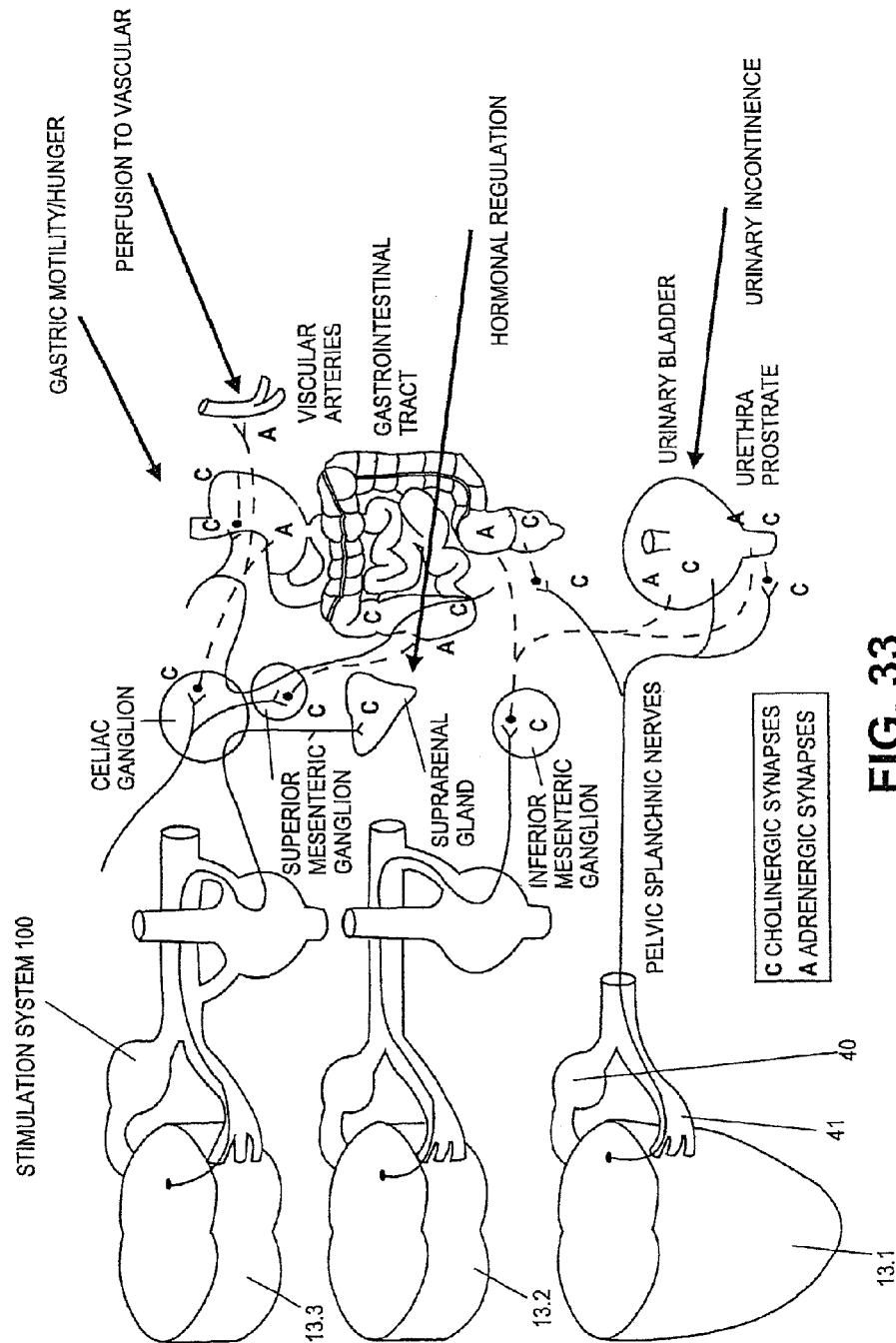


FIG. 33

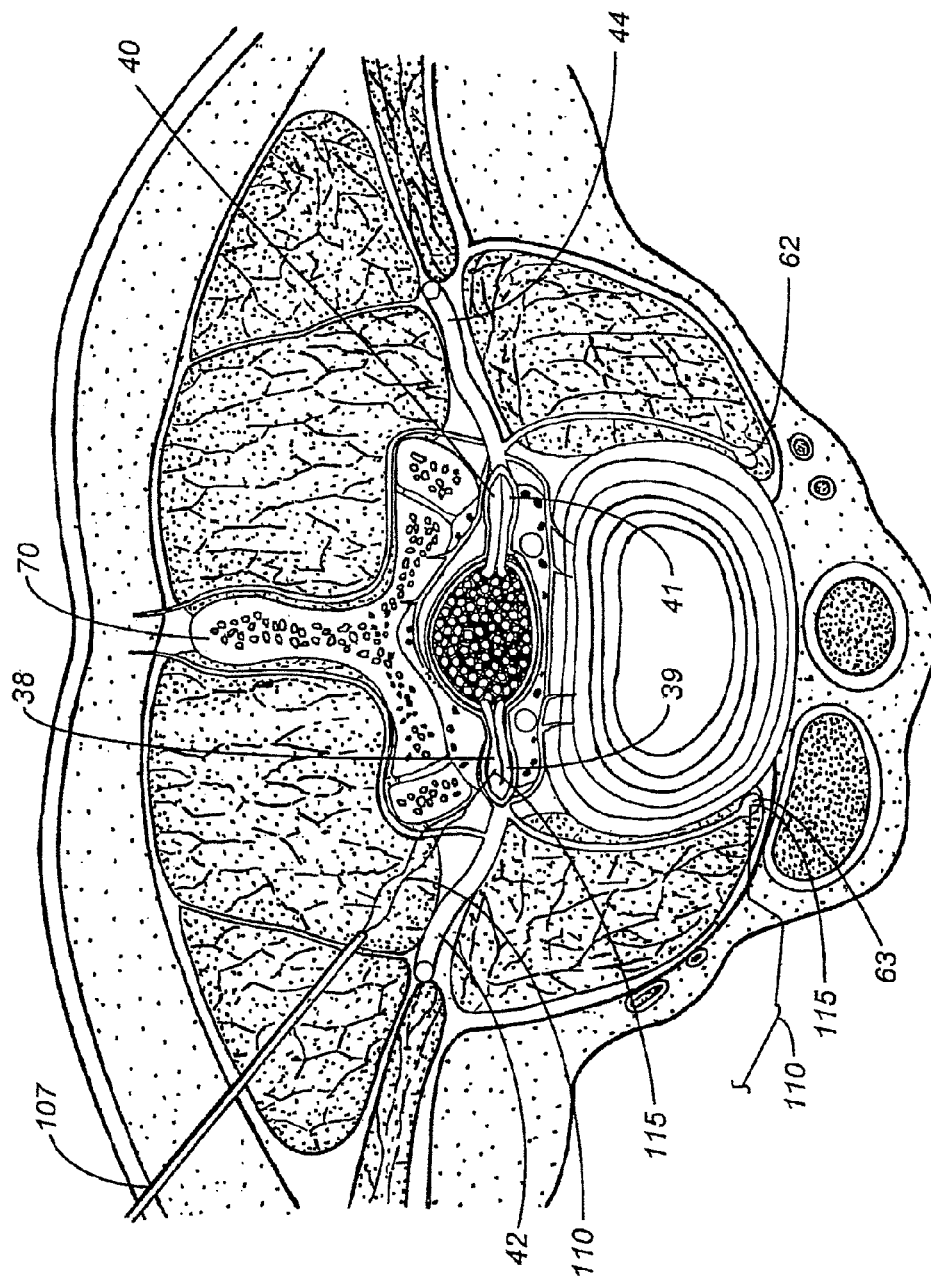


FIG. 34

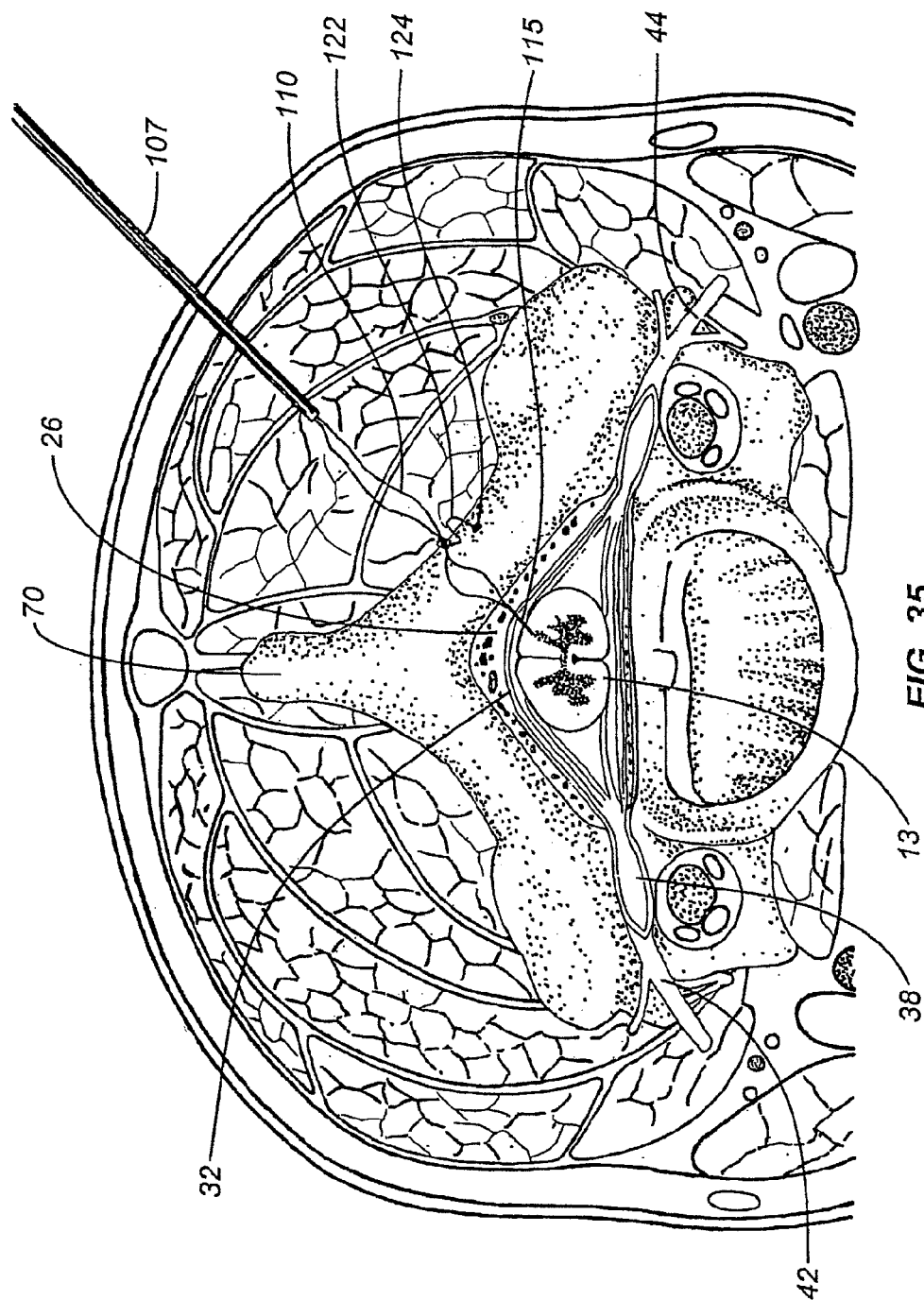


FIG. 35

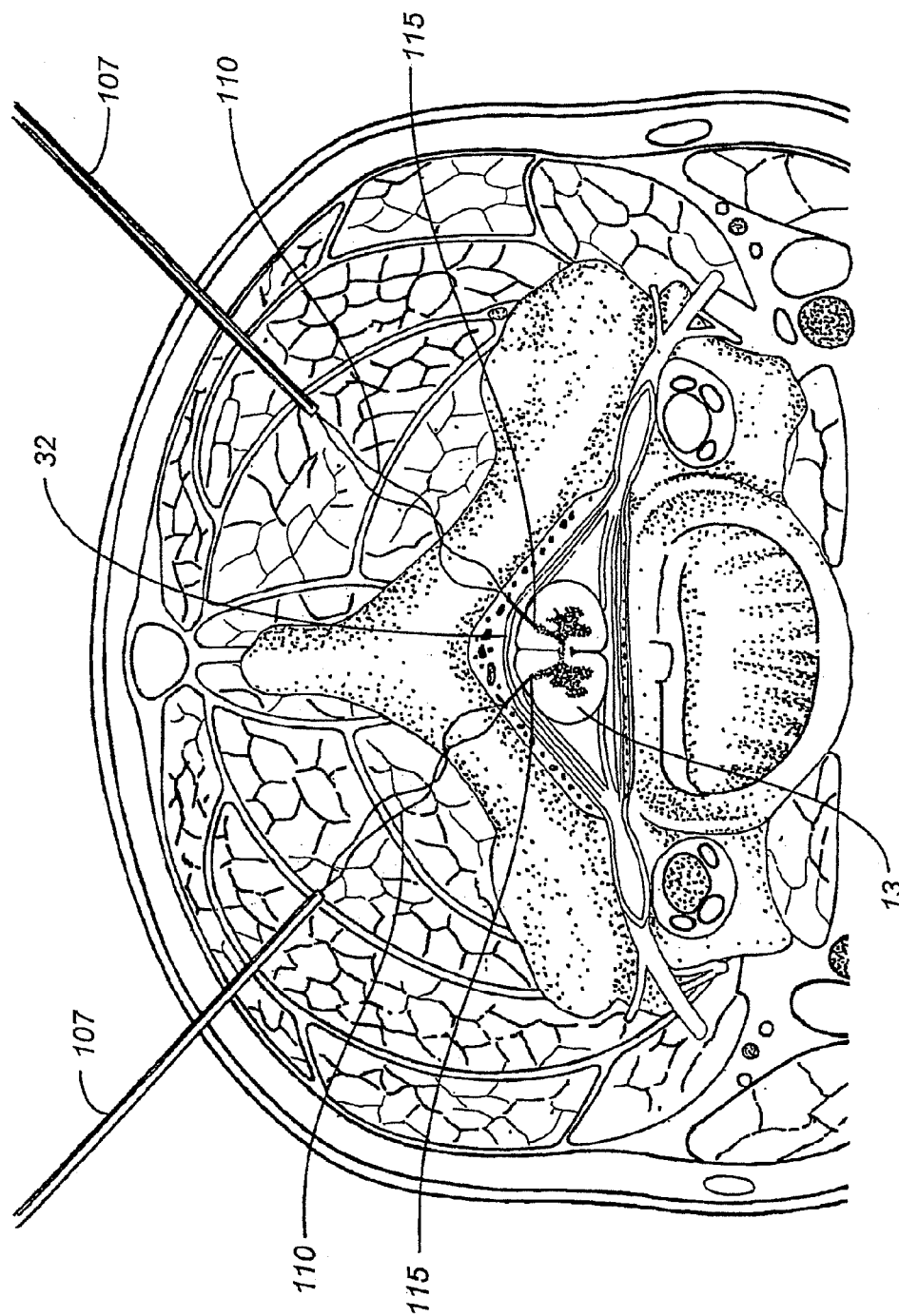
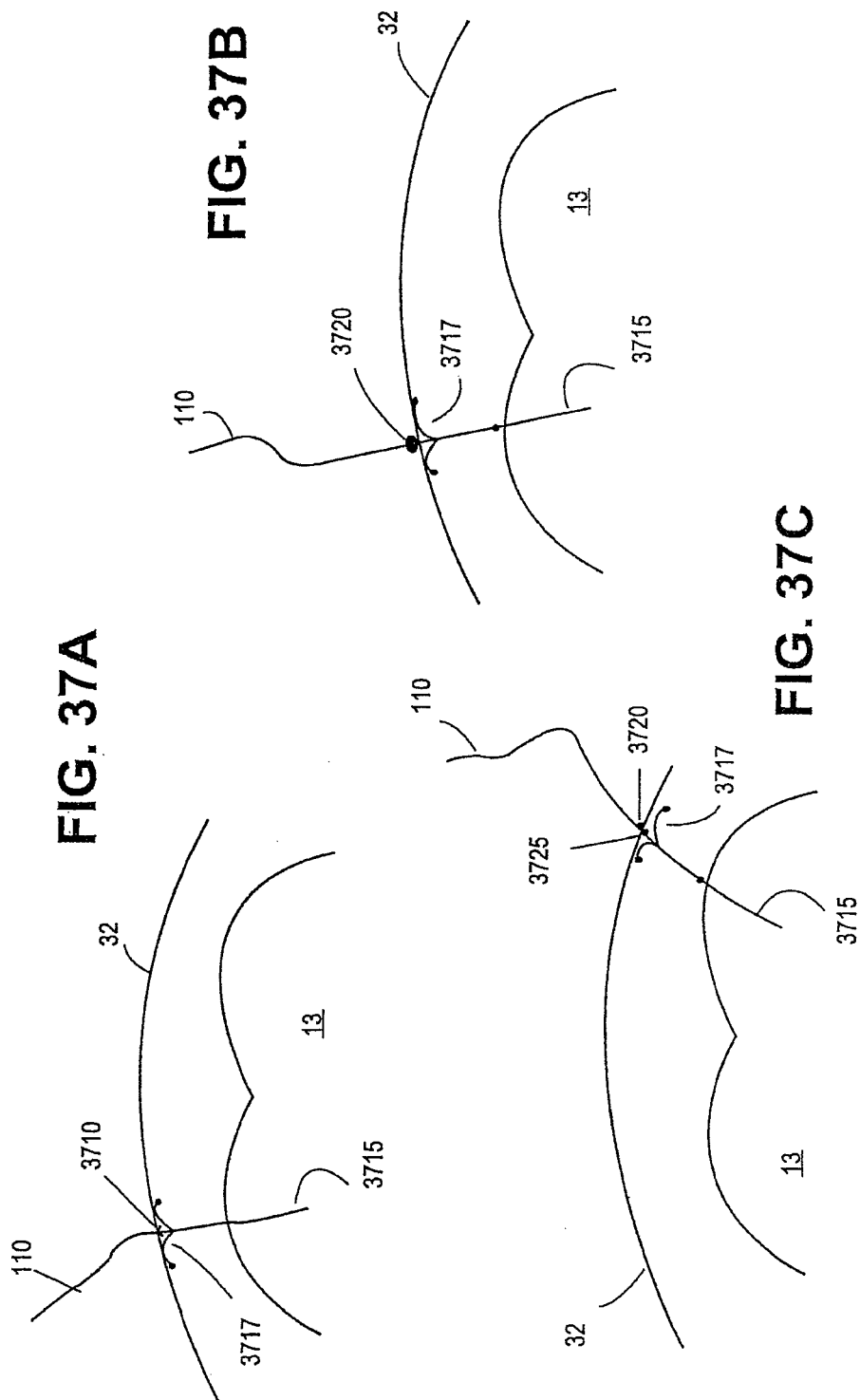


FIG. 36



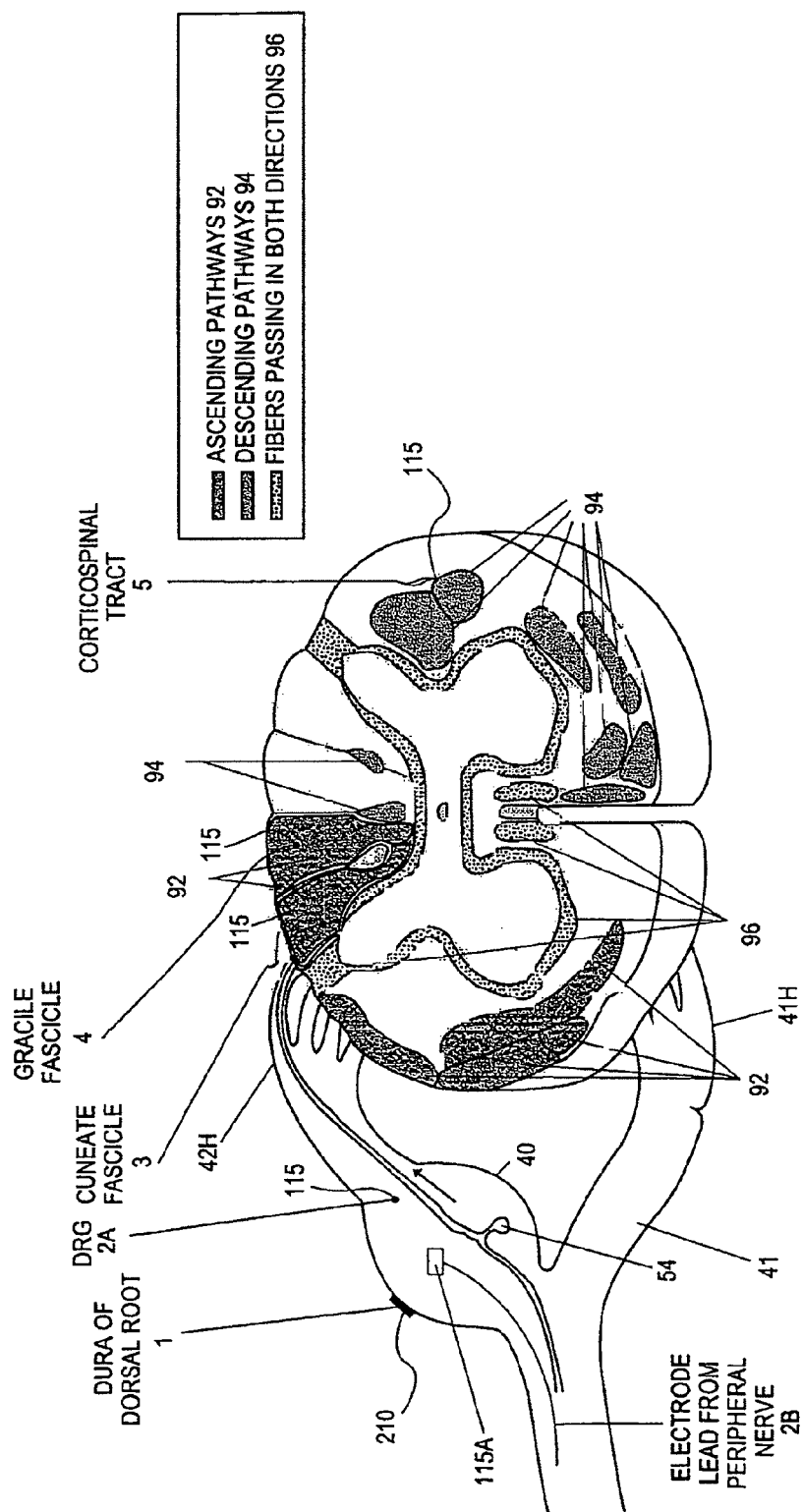


FIG. 38

1

NEUROSTIMULATION SYSTEM

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/051,770, filed Mar. 19, 2008, now Publication No. US-2008-0167698-A1, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/221,576 filed Sep. 7, 2005, now abandoned, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/608,357 filed Sep. 8, 2004, each of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD

The present invention relates to neurostimulation methods and systems that enable more precise stimulation of the nervous system. In particular, embodiments of the present invention provide for the controlled stimulation of spinal and paraspinal nerve root ganglion. In one embodiment, the ganglion is a dorsal root ganglion (DRG) and in another embodiment the ganglion is part of the sympathetic nervous system.

BACKGROUND

Application of specific electrical energy to the spinal cord for the purpose of managing pain has been actively practiced since the 1960s. While a precise understanding of the interaction between the applied electrical energy and the nervous tissue is not fully appreciated, it is known that application of an electrical field to spinal nervous tissue can effectively mask certain types of pain transmitted from regions of the body associated with the stimulated nervous tissue. More specifically, applying particularized electrical pulses to the spinal cord associated with regions of the body afflicted with chronic pain can induce paresthesia, or a subjective sensation of numbness or tingling, in the afflicted bodily regions. This paresthesia can effectively inhibit the transmission of non-acute pain sensations to the brain.

Electrical energy, similar to that used to inhibit pain perception, may also be used to manage the symptoms of various motor disorders, for example, tremor, dystonia, spasticity, and the like. Motor spinal nervous tissue, or nervous tissue from ventral nerve roots, transmits muscle/motor control signals. Sensory spinal nervous tissue, or nervous tissue from dorsal nerve roots, transmit pain signals. Corresponding dorsal and ventral nerve roots depart the spinal cord "separately"; however, immediately thereafter, the nervous tissue of the dorsal and ventral nerve roots are mixed, or intertwined. Accordingly, electrical stimulation intended to manage/control one condition (for example, pain) often results in the inadvertent interference with nerve transmission pathways in adjacent nervous tissue (for example, motor nerves).

As illustrated in FIG. 1, prior art spinal column or spinal cord stimulators (SCS) commonly deliver electrical energy to the spinal cord through an elongate paddle 5 or epidural electrode array containing electrodes 6 positioned external to the spinal cord dura layer 32. The spinal cord dura layer 32 surrounds the spinal cord 13 and is filled with cerebral spinal fluid (CSF). The spinal cord 13 is a continuous body and three spinal levels 14 of the spinal cord 13 are illustrated. For purposes of illustration, spinal levels 14 are sub-sections of the spinal cord 13 depicting that portion where the dorsal and ventral roots join the spinal cord 13. The peripheral nerve 44 divides into the dorsal root 42 and dorsal root ganglion 40 and the ventral nerve root 41 each of which feed into the spinal cord 13. An ascending pathway 92 is illustrated between level

2

2 and level 1 and a descending pathway 94 is illustrated from level 2 to level 3. Spinal levels 14 can correspond to the vertebral levels of the spine commonly used to describe the vertebral bodies of the spine. For simplicity, each level illustrates the nerves of only one side and a normal anatomical configuration would have similar nerves illustrated in the side of the spinal cord 13 directly adjacent the paddle 5.

Typically, SCS are placed in the spinal epidural space. Conventional SCS systems are described in numerous patents. Additional details of the placement and use of SCS can be found, for example, in U.S. Pat. No. 6,319,241 which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. In general, the paddle 5 is about 8 mm wide and from 24 to 60 mm long depending upon how many spinal levels are stimulated. The illustrated electrode paddle 5 is adapted to conventionally stimulate all three spinal levels 14. These exemplary levels 1, 2 and 3 could be anywhere along the spinal cord 13. Positioning a stimulation paddle 5 in this manner results in the electrodes 6 spanning a plurality of nerves, here the dorsal root ganglion 40, the ventral root 41 and peripheral nerve 41 on multiple spinal levels.

Because the paddle 5 spans several levels the generated stimulation energy 8 stimulates or is applied to more than one type of nerve tissue on more than one level. Moreover, these and other conventional, non-specific stimulation systems also apply stimulation energy to the spinal cord and to other neural tissue beyond the intended stimulation targets. As used herein, non-specific stimulation refers to the fact that the stimulation energy is provided to all spinal levels including the nerves and the spinal cord generally and indiscriminately. Even if the epidural electrode is reduced in size to simply stimulate only one level, that electrode will apply stimulation energy indiscriminately to everything (i.e., all nerve fibers and other tissues) within the range of the applied energy 8. Moreover, larger epidural electrode arrays may alter cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) flow thus further altering local neural excitability states.

Another challenge confronting conventional neurostimulation systems is that since epidural electrodes must apply energy across a wide variety of tissues and fluids (i.e., CSF fluid amount varies along the spine as does pia matter thickness) the amount of stimulation energy needed to provide the desired amount of neurostimulation is difficult to precisely control. As such, increasing amounts of energy may be required to ensure sufficient stimulation energy reaches the desired stimulation area. However, as applied stimulation energy increases so too increases the likelihood of deleterious damage or stimulation of surrounding tissue, structures or neural pathways.

To achieve stimulation the targeted tissue, the applied electrical energy should be properly defined and undesired energy application to non-targeted tissue be reduced or avoided. An improperly defined electric field may not only be ineffective in controlling/managing the desired condition(s) but may also inadvertently interfere with the proper neural pathways of adjacent spinal nervous tissue. Accordingly, a need exists for stimulation methods and systems that enable more precise delivery of stimulation energy.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

In one embodiment, there is provided a method of stimulating a dorsal root ganglion by implanting an electrode in proximity to the dorsal root ganglion; and activating the electrode to stimulate a portion of the dorsal root ganglion, or activating the electrode to stimulate substantially only the dorsal root ganglion.

In another embodiment, there is provided a method of stimulating a nerve root ganglion by implanting an electrode into the nerve root ganglion; and activating the electrode to stimulate the nerve root ganglion.

In another embodiment, there is provided, a method of stimulating the spinal cord by implanting an electrode into the spinal cord; and providing stimulation energy to spinal cord fibers using the electrode.

In another embodiment, there is provided a method of modulating nervous tissue within a dorsal root ganglion by implanting an electrode within a dorsal root ganglion; and providing electrical stimulation from the electrode to stimulate neural tissue within the dorsal root ganglion.

In another embodiment, there is provided a method of modulating a neural pathway in the sympathetic nervous system by stimulating a spinal dorsal root ganglion upstream of at least one ganglion of the sympathetic nerve chain to influence a condition associated with the at least one ganglion of the sympathetic nerve chain.

In yet another embodiment, there is provided a neurostimulation system having an electrode adapted for stimulation of only a nerve root ganglion; a signal generator coupled to the electrode; and a controller to control the output of the signal generator.

In yet another embodiment, there is provided a method of stimulating the spinal cord by piercing the spinal dura matter; and placing an electrode into contact with a portion of the intra-madullary of the spinal cord.

In yet another embodiment, there is a method of stimulating the nervous system by implanting an electrode such that when the electrode is activated, the electrode stimulates only a nerve root ganglion.

In yet another embodiment, there is provided a method of stimulating neural tissue to treat a condition including stimulating an electrode implanted to stimulate only a dorsal root ganglion on a spinal level wherein the stimulation treats the condition.

In yet another embodiment, there is provided a pulse generator, comprising at least one switch connected to at least one implantable electrode having an impedance greater than 2,500 ohms; a DC-DC converter adapted to provide a stimulation signal to the at least one implantable electrode; and a controller configured to control the output of the DC-DC converter.

In yet another embodiment, there is provided a stimulation component, comprising a proximal connector; a distal electrode configured to be implanted within the body at a stimulation site; an electrical lead connected to the proximal connector and the distal electrode; a strain relief mechanism in proximity to the stimulation site; and a fixation element adapted to reduce the amount of movement of the electrical lead proximal to a fixation point in an anatomical structure proximal to the stimulation site.

In another embodiment, there is provided a stimulation component, comprising a proximal connector; a distal electrode configured to be implanted within the body at a stimulation site; an electrical lead connected to the proximal connector and the distal electrode; a strain relief mechanism in proximity to the stimulation site; and a fixation element adapted to reduce the amount of movement of the electrical lead proximal to a fixation point in an anatomical structure proximal to the stimulation site.

In another embodiment, there is provided a stimulation system, comprising a pulse generator; an electrode connector having a flexible, elongate body with a proximal end electrically connected to the pulse generator and a distal end adapted to connect to a microelectrode lead, wherein the microelec-

trode lead connects proximally to the electrode connector distal end and has a distal microelectrode electrically connected to the pulse generator.

In yet another embodiment, there is provided a stimulation system, comprising a battery; a pulse generator separate from the battery; an electrical connection between the battery and the pulse generator; a microelectrode lead connected proximally to the pulse generator and distally to a microelectrode.

In yet another embodiment, there is provided a neurostimulation component, comprising a body having a distal end and a proximal end and a length selected to implant the body within a targeted neural tissue; a tip on the distal end of the body adapted to pierce through the targeted neural tissue; and an electrode structure positioned on the body adapted to neurostimulate only the targeted neural tissue.

In yet another embodiment, there is provided a method of neurostimulating targeted neural tissue, comprising implanting an electrode in a position adapted to neurostimulate only targeted neural tissue; and providing a controlled stimulation signal from a signal generator coupled to the electrode.

In another embodiment, the neurostimulation system comprises an electrode adapted for stimulation of only a nerve root ganglion, a signal generator coupled to the electrode, and a controller to control the output of the signal generator. In some embodiments, the electrode has an active electrode area of less than 10 mm². In other embodiments, the electrode has an active electrode area of less than 5 mm². And in still other embodiments, the electrode has an active electrode area of less than 1 mm².

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

All publications and patent applications mentioned in this specification are herein incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual publication or patent application was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A better understanding of the features and advantages of the various embodiments of the present invention will be obtained by reference to the following detailed description and the accompanying drawings of which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a conventional epidural electrode array positioned external to and stimulating a portion of the spinal cord;

FIG. 2A illustrates an embodiment an electrode implanted into a spinal dorsal root ganglion;

FIG. 2B illustrates how selective stimulation techniques of FIG. 2A may raise a response threshold;

FIG. 3A illustrates a stimulation system with an electrode embodiment of the present invention implanted into a dorsal root ganglion (DRG) of a spinal level;

FIG. 3B relates the spinal nerve roots to their respective vertebral spinal levels;

FIG. 3C illustrates the various dermatomes of the body related to their respective nerve roots in FIG. 3B;

FIG. 4A illustrates a single electrode, single level activation pattern and FIG. 4B illustrates an exemplary corresponding dermatome to the stimulation pattern of FIG. 4A;

FIG. 5A illustrates a single electrode per level, two level activation pattern and FIG. 5B illustrates an exemplary corresponding dermatome to the stimulation pattern of FIG. 5A;

FIG. 6A illustrates a two electrode, single level activation pattern and FIG. 6B illustrates an exemplary corresponding dermatome to the stimulation pattern of FIG. 6A;

5

FIG. 7A illustrates a single electrode level and a two electrode level activation pattern and FIG. 7B illustrates an exemplary corresponding dermatome to the stimulation pattern of FIG. 7A;

FIG. 8A is a section view of a spinal level with an electrode being implanted into a dorsal root ganglia and FIG. 8B is the view of FIG. 8A with the delivery catheter being withdrawn and the electrode implanted into the dorsal root ganglia;

FIG. 9A is a section view of a spinal level with an electrode being implanted into a dorsal root ganglia using an approach that crosses a medial line of the level of interest and FIG. 9B is an enlarged view of the DRG in FIG. 9A with an implanted electrode;

FIG. 10A is a section view of a spinal level with an electrode being implanted onto or in the nerve root epinurium using an approach that crosses a medial line of the level of interest and FIG. 10B is an enlarged view of the implanted electrode in FIG. 10A;

FIG. 11 is a illustrates an alternative DRG implantation technique using an approach along the peripheral nerve;

FIG. 12A illustrates an implantation technique using an electrode and anchor design illustrated in FIG. 12B;

FIG. 12C illustrates an alternative anchoring technique using the surrounding vertebral bone;

FIG. 13A illustrates the monopolar stimulation component embodiment illustrated in FIG. 13B implanted in a DRG;

FIG. 14A illustrates the bi-polar stimulation component embodiment illustrated in FIG. 14B implanted in a DRG;

FIG. 15A is a chart illustrating the relationship between impedance and electrode surface area;

FIG. 15B is a chart illustrating representative electrode areas for stimulation components of several embodiments of the invention;

FIGS. 16-20 are various alternative electrode embodiments;

FIG. 20A illustrates an electrode adapted to pierce through and anchor to targeted neural tissue;

FIG. 20B illustrates a securing ring adapted for use with the electrode in FIG. 20A;

FIG. 20C illustrates a piercing electrode embodiment in position to stimulate a ganglion in the sympathetic chain;

FIG. 20D illustrates a piercing electrode embodiment in position to stimulate a dorsal root ganglion;

FIG. 21 illustrates a coated electrode implanted into a DRG;

FIG. 22 illustrates the position of the DRG upstream of various a number of stimulation mechanisms;

FIG. 23A illustrates a combination stimulation and agent delivery electrode that provides the threshold adjustment illustrated in FIG. 23B;

FIG. 23C and 23D illustrate combined stimulation and pharmacological agent delivery electrodes and systems;

FIG. 24 is a table listing several exemplary pharmacological agents and their uses;

FIG. 25 is a illustration of Na and Ca channel blocking targets to mitigate c-fiber activity;

FIG. 26 is a schematic drawing of an embodiment of a pulse generator;

FIG. 27 is a schematic drawing of an electrode connector embodiment;

FIG. 28 is an alternative single pulse generator stimulation system embodiment;

FIG. 29 is an alternative embodiment of a multi-pulse generator stimulation system with generators in a master-slave arrangement;

FIG. 30 is an embodiment of a stimulation system adapted to treat conditions in spinal levels C1-C3;

6

FIGS. 31A and 31B illustrate, respectively, the result of stimulation provided by embodiments of the present invention to increase sub-threshold signals above a threshold level;

FIG. 32 is an illustration of the sympathetic nervous system;

FIG. 33 is an illustration of a portion of sympathetic nervous system neuromodulated by an stimulation system embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 34 is an illustration of embodiments of the present invention implanted for the direct stimulation of a single sympathetic nerve ganglion and a single dorsal root ganglion on the same spinal level;

FIG. 35 is an illustration of an embodiment of the present invention implanted for the direct stimulation of the spinal cord;

FIG. 36 is an illustration of two embodiments of the present invention implanted for the direct stimulation of the spinal cord;

FIG. 37A-37C illustrate sealing embodiments used when implanting electrodes into the spinal cord; and

FIG. 38 summarizes numerous alternative embodiments of the stimulation system of the present invention as applied to different portions of the spine and dorsal root ganglion.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Embodiments of the present invention provide novel stimulation systems and methods that enable direct and specific neurostimulation techniques. For example, there is provided a method of stimulating a nerve root ganglion comprising implanting an electrode into the nerve root ganglion and activating the electrode to stimulate the nerve root ganglion. As discussed in greater detail below, the nerve root ganglion may be a dorsal root ganglion in some embodiments while in other embodiments the nerve root ganglion may be a nerve root ganglion in the sympathetic nervous system or other ganglion or tissue. In some embodiments, implanting the electrode includes forming an opening in the epinurium of the root ganglion and passing the electrode through the opening and into the interior space or interfascicular space of the ganglion.

In other embodiments, portions of an electrode body pass completely through a ganglion while maintaining an active electrode area appropriately positioned to deliver stimulation energy to the ganglion. In still other embodiments of the microelectrodes and stimulation systems of the invention, the size, shape and position of a microelectrode and the stimulation pattern or algorithm is chosen to stimulate targeted neural tissue and exclude others. In other additional embodiments, the electrode stimulation energy is delivered to the targeted neural tissue so that the energy dissipates or attenuates beyond the targeted tissue or region.

Once the electrode is in place on, in or adjacent the desired nerve root ganglion, the activating step proceeds by coupling a programmable electrical signal to the electrode. In one embodiment, the amount of stimulation energy provided into the nerve ganglion is sufficient to selectively stimulate neural tissue. In a specific embodiment, the stimulation energy provided only stimulates neural tissue within the targeted DRG. Alternatively, the stimulation energy beyond the DRG is below a level sufficient to stimulate, modulate or influence nearby neural tissue.

In an example where the electrode is implanted into a dorsal root ganglion, the stimulation level may be selected as one that preferentially activates myelinated, large diameter fibers (such as A β and A α fibers) over unmyelinated, small diameter fibers (such as c-fibers). In additional embodiments,

the stimulation energy used to activate an electrode to stimulate neural tissue remains at an energy level below the level to used ablate, lesion or otherwise damage the neural tissue. For example, during a radiofrequency percutaneous partial rhizotomy, an electrode is placed into a dorsal root ganglia and activated until a thermolesion is formed (i.e., at a electrode tip temperature of about 67° C.) resulting in a partial and temporary sensory loss in the corresponding dermatome. In one embodiment, the stimulation energy levels applied to a DRG remain below the energy levels used during thermal ablation, RF ablation or other rhizotomy procedures.

Tissue stimulation is mediated when current flow through the tissue reaches a threshold, which causes cells experiencing this current flow to depolarize. Current is generated when a voltage is supplied, for example, between two electrodes with specific surface area. The current density in the immediate vicinity of the stimulating electrode is an important parameter. For example, a current of 1 mA flowing through a 1 mm² area electrode has the same current density in its vicinity as 10 mA of current flowing through a 10 mm² area electrode, that is 1 mA/mm². In this example, cells close to the electrode surface experience the same stimulation current. The difference is that the larger electrode can stimulate a larger volume of cells and the smaller electrode can stimulate a smaller volume of cells in proportion to their surface area.

In many instances, the preferred effect is to stimulate or reversibly block nervous tissue. Use of the term “block” or “blockade” in this application means disruption, modulation, and inhibition of nerve impulse transmission. Abnormal regulation can result in an excitation of the pathways or a loss of inhibition of the pathways, with the net result being an increased perception or response. Therapeutic measures can be directed towards either blocking the transmission of signals or stimulating inhibitory feedback. Electrical stimulation permits such stimulation of the target neural structures and, equally importantly, prevents the total destruction of the nervous system. Additionally, electrical stimulation parameters can be adjusted so that benefits are maximized and side effects are minimized.

FIG. 2A illustrates an embodiment of a stimulation system **100** of the present invention in place with an electrode **115** implanted into a spinal dorsal root ganglion **40**. For purposes of illustration, spinal level **14**, a sub-section of the spinal cord **13**, is used to depict where the dorsal root **42** and ventral root **41** join the spinal cord **13**, indicated by **42H** and **41H** respectively. The peripheral nerve **44** divides into the dorsal root **42** and dorsal root ganglion **40** and the ventral nerve root **41**. For simplicity, the nerves of only one side are illustrated and a normal anatomical configuration would have similar nerves positioned on the other side. The spinal dura layer **32** surrounds the spinal cord **13** and is filled with cerebral spinal fluid (CSF). For clarity, the spinal dura layer or dura mater **32** alone is used to represent the three spinal meninges—the pia mater, the arachnoid mater and the dura mater—that surround and protect the spinal cord **13**.

Note that the electrode **115** is implanted medial to the peripheral nerve **44** after the nerve root splits into the ventral nerve **41** containing the motor nerves and the dorsal root **42** containing the sensory nerves. The electrode **115** is also implanted lateral of the dura layer **32**. The advantageous placement of one or more electrode embodiments of the present invention enables selective stimulation of neural tissue, such as a nerve root ganglion, without stimulation of surrounding neural tissue. In this example, a dorsal root ganglion **40** is stimulated with little or imperceptible amounts of stimulation energy provided to the motor nerves within the ventral nerve root **44**, portions of the spinal cord **13**, spinal

level **14**, or the peripheral nerve **44**. Embodiments of the present invention are particularly well suited for providing pain control since the sensory fibers running through the dorsal root ganglion **40** may be specifically targeted. Advantageously, embodiments of the present invention may neuromodulate one or more the dorsal root ganglia for pain control without influencing surrounding tissue.

The stimulation system **100** includes a pulse generator that provides stimulation energy in programmable patterns adapted for direct stimulation of neural tissue using small area, high impedance microelectrodes. The level of stimulation provided is selected to preferentially stimulate the A β and A α fibers **52** over the c-fibers **54**. Stimulation energy levels used by embodiments of the present invention utilize lower stimulation energy levels than conventional non-direct, non-specific stimulations systems because the electrode **115** is advantageously placed on, in or about a dorsal root ganglion **40**. Based on conventional gate control theory, it is believed that by stimulating of the faster transmitting A β and A α fibers **52** by the stimulation methods of the present invention, the signal **53** from the fibers **52** will release opiates at the junction of the dorsal root **42** and the spinal cord **13**. This release raises the response threshold at that junction (elevated junction threshold **56**). The later arriving c-fiber signal **55** remains below the elevated junction threshold **56** and goes undetected.

Accordingly, some embodiments of the present invention provide selective stimulation of the spinal cord, peripheral nervous system and/or one or more dorsal root ganglia. As used herein in one embodiment, selective stimulation means that the stimulation substantially only neuromodulates or neurostimulates a nerve root ganglion. In one embodiment, selective stimulation of a dorsal root ganglion leaves the motor nerves unstimulated or unmodulated. In addition, in other embodiments, selective stimulation can also mean that within the nerve sheath, the A-myelinated fibers are preferentially stimulated or neuromodulated as compared to the c-unmyelinated fibers. As such, embodiments of the present invention advantageously utilize the fact that A-fibers carry neural impulses more rapidly (almost twice as fast) as c-fibers. Some embodiments of the present invention are adapted to provide stimulation levels intended to preferentially stimulate A-fibers over c-fibers.

In additional embodiments, selective stimulation can also mean that the electrode (including an electrode coated with or adapted to deliver a pharmacological agent, e.g., FIGS. **21**, **23A**, C and D) is in intimate contact with the tissue or other nervous system component that is the subject of stimulation. This aspect recognizes our advantageous use of electrode placement. In specific illustrative embodiments discussed further below, one or more stimulation electrodes are placed (1) against or in contact with the outer sheath of a nerve root ganglion; (2) within a nerve root ganglion; (3) within the root ganglion interfascicular space; (4) in contact with a portion of the spinal cord; (5) in a position that requires piercing of the epidural space, the dura, nerve root epineurium or a portion of the spinal cord; (6) in contact with a portion of the sympathetic nervous system or (7) in contact with neural tissue targeted for direct stimulation.

Moreover, selective stimulation or neuromodulation concepts described herein may be applied in a number of different configurations. Unilateral (on or in one root ganglion on a level), bi-lateral (on or in two root ganglion on the same level), unilevel (one or more root ganglion on the same level) or multi-level (at least one root ganglion is stimulated on each of two or more levels) or combinations of the above including stimulation of a portion of the sympathetic nervous system

and one or more dorsal root ganglia associated with the neural activity or transmission of that portion of the sympathetic nervous system. As such, embodiments of the present invention may be used to create a wide variety of stimulation control schemes, individually or overlapping, to create and provide zones of treatment.

FIG. 3A illustrates an embodiment of a stimulation system 100 of the present invention with an electrode 115 implanted into a dorsal root ganglion (DRG) 40. The figure illustrates three representative spinal levels 14 (i.e., spinal levels 1-3) of the spinal cord 13. The peripheral nerve 44 feeds into the dorsal root ganglion 40 and the ventral nerve root 41 each of which feed into the spinal cord 13. The dorsal horns 37, 36 are also indicated. For clarity, the dura 32 and complete spinal cord 13 are not illustrated but are present as described elsewhere in this application and as occur in human anatomy. These exemplary levels 1, 2 and 3 could be anywhere along the spinal cord 13. For simplicity, each level illustrates the nerves of only one side.

Using level 2 as a reference, an ascending pathway 92 is illustrated between level 2 and level 1 and a descending pathway 94 is illustrated from level 2 to level 3. Application of stimulation energy or signals to the DRG 40 in level 2 may be used to block signals progressing upstream from level 2 towards the path/pathways 92. Moreover, modulation applied to portions of level 2 but may also be used to effectively block the neuron paths/pathways from another level (here, alternatively using levels 1 and/or 3) from reaching the brain. As such, application of stimulation to the level 2 DRG 40 using an embodiment of an apparatus and/or method of the present invention may advantageously provide an effective block of intrasegment pain pathways as well. It is to be appreciated that while three continuous levels are illustrated, some embodiments of the present invention may be used to stimulate 2 or more adjacent levels and still other embodiments may be used to stimulate 2 or more non-adjacent levels, or combinations thereof.

FIG. 3B relates the spinal nerve roots to their respective vertebral spinal levels. The letter C designates nerves and vertebrae in the cervical levels. The letter T designates vertebrae and nerves in the thoracic levels. The letter L designates vertebrae and nerves in the lumbar levels. The letter S designates vertebrae and nerves in the sacral levels. FIG. 3C illustrates the various dermatomes of the body related to their respective nerve roots using the designations in FIG. 3B.

FIGS. 4-7 illustrate one embodiment of a stimulation system activated under a variety of control conditions to provide different levels and degrees of pain control. FIGS. 4A, 5A, 6A and 7A all illustrate the stimulation system in various degrees of activation. FIGS. 4B, 5B, 6B and 7B illustrate a correspondingly influenced dermatome.

FIGS. 4A, 5A, 6A and 7A illustrate a stimulation system 100 having 3 electrodes 115 implanted into dorsal root ganglia 40 on two adjacent spinal levels. For simplicity, each spinal level illustrates a dorsal root ganglion 40, a ventral root 41 and a peripheral nerve 44. The exception is spinal level 3 that illustrates an additional dorsal root ganglion 38, a ventral root 39 and a peripheral nerve 42. The three electrodes 115 are designated channels 1, 2 and 3 by the controller 106. Each electrode is activated to provide modulation energy or signals under the control of the controller 106. Exemplary electrodes for implantation into a nerve root ganglion are further described with regard to FIGS. 12A-13B. Level 3 is an example of bilateral electrode placement and level 2 is an example of unilateral electrode placement. As such, the illustrated embodiment is a multi-level, unilateral and bi-lateral stimulation system. Stimulation energy is provided by a pulse

generator (not illustrated but described in greater detail below in FIGS. 26-29) under control of a suitable neurostimulation controller 106. Those of ordinary skill will recognize that any of a wide variety of known neurostimulation controllers may be used. Not illustrated in this view but present in the system are suitable connections between the various electrodes 115, electrode leads 110 and the controller 106. In the illustrations that follow, a line connecting the electrode lead 110 to the controller 106 indicates "stimulation on" communication from the controller 106 to one electrode 115 (see FIG. 4A) or more than one electrode 115 (see FIG. 5A).

A signal of "stimulation on" indicates any of a wide variety of stimulation patterns and degrees of stimulation. The "stimulation on" signal may be an oscillating electrical signal may be applied continuously or intermittently. Furthermore, if an electrode is implanted directly into or adjacent to more than one ganglion, the oscillating electrical signal may be applied to one electrode and not the other and vice versa. One can adjust the stimulating poles, the pulse width, the amplitude, as well as the frequency of stimulation and other controllable electrical and signally factors to achieve a desired modulation or stimulation outcome.

The application of the oscillating electrical signal stimulates the area of the nerve chain where the electrode 115 is placed. This stimulation may either increase or decrease nerve activity. The frequency of this oscillating electrical signal is then adjusted until the symptoms manifest by physiological disorder being treated has been demonstrably alleviated. This may step may be performed using patient feedback, sensors or other physiological parameter or indication. Once identified, this frequency is then considered the ideal frequency. Once the ideal frequency has been determined, the oscillating electrical signal is maintained at this ideal frequency by storing that frequency in the controller.

In one specific example, the oscillating electrical signal is operated at a voltage between about 0.5 V to about 20 V or more. More preferably, the oscillating electrical signal is operated at a voltage between about 1 V to about 30 V or even 40V. For micro stimulation, it is preferable to stimulate within the range of 1V to about 20V, the range being dependent on factors such as the surface area of the electrode. Preferably, the electric signal source is operated at a frequency range between about 10 Hz to about 1000 Hz. More preferably, the electric signal source is operated at a frequency range between about 30 Hz to about 500 Hz. Preferably, the pulse width of the oscillating electrical signal is between about 25 microseconds to about 500 microseconds. More preferably, the pulse width of the oscillating electrical signal is between about 50 microseconds to about 300 microseconds.

The application of the oscillating electrical signal may be provided in a number of different ways including, but not limited to: (1) a monopolar stimulation electrode and a large area non-stimulating electrode return electrode; (2) several monopolar stimulating electrodes and a single large area non-stimulating return electrode; (3) a pair of closely spaced bipolar electrodes; and (4) several pairs of closely spaced bipolar electrodes. Other configurations are possible. For example, the stimulation electrode(s) of the present invention may be used in conjunction with another non-stimulating electrode—the return electrode—or a portion of the stimulation system may be adapted and/or configured to provide the functionality of a return electrode. Portions of the stimulation system that may be adapted and/or configured to provide the functionality of the return electrode include, without limitation, the battery casing or the pulse generator casing.

In the illustrated configuration, a stimulation pattern provided to one of the electrodes positioned in level 3 (i.e.,

11

channel #1 "ON") produces pain blocking/relief in the indicated region of the body (i.e., shaded area R1) in FIG. 4B.

It will be appreciated that embodiments of the present invention can stimulate specific dermatome distributions to probe which electrode or group of electrodes or combination of electrodes (including drug coated or delivery electrodes) is best positioned or correlates most closely to one or more specific areas of pain. As such, a stimulation system according to an embodiment of the present invention may be "fine tuned" to a specific area of coverage or type of pain. The results obtained from such testing can be used to one or more stimulation or treatment regimes (i.e., series of stimulations in the presence of or in combination with a therapeutic agent from a coated electrode) for a particular patient for a particular type of pain. These pain treatment regimes may be programmed into a suitable electronic controller or computer controller system (described below) to store the treatment program, control and monitor the system components execution of the stimulation regime as the desired therapeutic regime is executed.

FIG. 5A provides another example of distribution of pain relief using a multi-channel stimulation system and method. In the illustrated configuration and stimulation pattern, a stimulation pattern is provided to one electrode each in levels 2 and 3 via channels #1 and #2. This stimulation electrode pattern provides pain blocking/relief in the indicated region of the body (i.e., areas R1, R2) of FIG. 5B.

FIG. 6A provides another example of distribution of pain relief using a multi-channel stimulation system and method. In the illustrated configuration and stimulation pattern, a stimulation pattern provided to both electrodes in level 3 via channels #1 and #3 provides pain blocking/relief in the indicated region of the body (i.e., area R3) of FIG. 6B.

FIG. 7A provides another example of distribution of pain relief using a multi-channel stimulation system and method. In the illustrated configuration and stimulation pattern, a stimulation pattern is provided to all electrodes in the system via channels #1, #2 and #3. This stimulation electrode pattern provides pain blocking/relief in the indicated region R4 of the body (i.e., FIG. 7B). It is to be appreciated that the electrode placement and blocking region patterns illustrated by FIGS. 4A-7B may be modified using information such as in FIGS. 3B and 3C for targeted placement to specific portions of the body depending upon individual needs.

Micro-electrode and stimulation system embodiments of the present invention may be implanted into a single nerve root ganglion utilizing the implantation methods of the present invention. The implantation methods described herein provide numerous advantages, including but not limited to: low risk percutaneous access route similar to other procedures, direct delivery of localized quantities of pharmacological agents at the nerve root when using embodiment having electrodes coated with pharmacological agents, and electrode placement that enables preferential, selective nerve fiber stimulation.

FIG. 8A illustrates a cross section view of a spinal level. Peripheral nerves 44, 42 feed into dorsal root ganglia 40, 38 and ventral nerves 41, 39 respectively. A vertebral body 70 and two sympathetic nerve ganglia 62, 63 are also illustrated. In this embodiment, the method includes advancing a suitable catheter 107 medially towards the vertebral body 70, then along the peripheral nerve 42 towards the dorsal root ganglion 38. The catheter 107 is advanced using external imaging modalities for guidance such as fluoroscopy or other suitable medical imaging technique. The vertebral foramen offers a good landmark visible under fluoroscopy and useful in locating the DRG 38.

12

The electrode 115 is implanted in proximity to the dorsal root ganglion by forming an opening in the dorsal root ganglion epinurium and passing the electrode through the opening (FIGS. 8A, 8B). The opening may be formed using conventional methods such as a cutting edge on or provided to the tip of the catheter 107, with an instrument advanced through a working channel within the catheter 107 or through the use of other suitable endoscopic or minimally invasive surgical procedure. Alternatively, the electrode body or distal end may be provided with a tissue cutting or piercing element to aid in piercing tissue (see, e.g., tip 908 in FIG. 20A). As the catheter 107 is withdrawn, the microelectrode leads 110 are deployed and attached, anchored or otherwise secured to the tissue, anatomy or bones adjacent the DRG 38 to reduce the likelihood that electrode 115 will be pulled from the DRG 38. In alternative embodiments described below, the microelectrode leads 110 may be fixed prior to electrode implantation into a nerve root ganglion.

Note that the electrode 115 is sized and shaped to fit within the DRG 38. A typical DRG is generally spherical with a diameter of 3-5 mm. Of course, a range of DRG sizes occur in humans and may vary in size depending on the age and sex of the individual and other factors. Electrode embodiments may be provided in a range of sizes to accommodate the specific anatomical characteristics of a patient. A number of factors are considered when selecting an appropriate DRG electrode embodiment for use in an individual.

Electrode placement within the DRG may be confirmed using neurodiagnostic testing techniques such as somatosensory evoked potential (SSEP) and electromyography (EMG) adapted for the methods and systems described herein. One illustrative example includes the placement of sensing electrodes in the sensory nervous system above and below the DRG level having the implanted electrode(s). Implant the electrode into the targeted DRG. Apply a test stimulation to the DRG and measure voltage potential at the sensory electrodes above and below the targeted DRG to confirm that the electrode is implanted in the targeted DRG. A test stimulation may range from 0.4 v to 0.8v at 50 Hz or may be some other suitable stimulation level based on the evoked potential measurement technique used. In this way, conventional fluoroscopy techniques and instruments may be used to advance towards and implant the electrode into the DRG and confirm that the electrode is correctly implanted and stimulating the targeted DRG.

A number of different approaches are available for maneuvering an electrode into position on, in or about a DRG. Several exemplary approaches are provided in FIGS. 8-10 in a section view of the cauda equina portion of the spinal cord. In these examples, electrodes 115 are placed on or in a ganglion on a representative sacral spinal level. Sympathetic nervous system ganglia 62, 63 are also indicated. DRG 40 and ventral root 41 are associated with peripheral nerve 44. DRG 38 and ventral root 39 are associated with peripheral nerve 42.

FIGS. 8A and 8B illustrate a lateral approach to a DRG 38 using a suitable catheter 107. The catheter advances adjacent to the peripheral nerve 42 medially towards the DRG 38. The DRG dura is pierced laterally and the electrode 115 is advanced into the DRG interior. Thereafter, the electrode 115 is implanted into the DRG interior. Next, as is illustrated in FIG. 8B, the catheter 107 is withdrawn from the DRG 38 and deploys the electrode leads 110. The electrode leads 110 may be anchored to the vertebral body 70 using suitable fixation techniques. The leads 110 are then connected to a pulse generator/controller (not shown).

FIG. 9A is anatomically similar to FIGS. 8A and 8B. FIG. 9A illustrates an alternative DRG implantation approach that

13

crosses the medial line inferior to the DRG of interest. The catheter **107** is advanced in a superior pathway towards the foramen and using the foramen under fluoroscopic guidance into the DRG. As illustrated in FIGS. **9A** and **9B**, there is provided a method of stimulating a dorsal root ganglion by implanting an electrode within the dorsal root ganglion. In some embodiments, the implanting procedure includes passing a portion of the electrode through the spinal epidural space. Electrodes in systems of the present invention onto or in the nerve root epineurium **72** (FIGS. **10A** and **10B**) or within the nerve root (i.e., FIGS. **9A**, **9B**). Moreover, in some embodiments, there is also the step of forming an opening in the dorsal root ganglion epineurium **72** and then passing the electrode through the opening (see, i.e., FIG. **9B**).

FIG. **11** illustrates a section view through a portion of the spinal cord **13** with another alternative electrode implantation technique. In contrast to the earlier described methods that externally approach the DRG and involve piercing or entering the DRG epineurium **72**, FIG. **11** illustrates an internal approach to the DRG interlaminar from within the nerve sheath of a peripheral nerve **44**. FIG. **11** illustrates a section view of the nerve sheath partially removed to reveal the underlying nerve bundle **46**. In this illustrative example, an opening is made in the peripheral nerve **44** sheath at a point **45** lateral to the DRG **40**. The microelectrode **115** enters the nerve **44** sheath through opening **45** using suitable endoscopic or minimally invasive surgical techniques. Next, the electrode **115** is advanced towards and into the DRG **40**.

As each of these illustrative embodiments make clear, the placement of the electrode relative to the DRG enables activating the electrode to selectively stimulate sensory nerves. Additionally, the placement of the electrode according to the methods of the invention enable activating the electrode to stimulate sensory nerves within the DRG or without stimulating motor nerves in the nearby ventral root. The control system described herein also provides stimulation levels that activate the electrode to stimulate at a level that preferably stimulates myelinated fibers over unmyelinated fibers.

In addition, as will be described in greater detail below, FIG. **11** illustrates an electrode embodiment where the electrode tip and shaft may be coated with pharmacological agents to assist in the stimulation therapy or provide other therapeutic benefit. As illustrated, the electrode includes a tip coating **130** and a shaft coating **132**. The pharmacological agent in each coating **130**, **132** could be the same or different. One advantage of implanting through the nerve sheath is that the coated shaft **132** may include a pharmacological agent active or beneficial to neural activity in the ventral nerve root **41** since this coated shaft is advantageously positioned proximal to the ventral root **41**. The shaft coating **132** may also be selected to reduce inflammation or irritation caused by the presence of the shaft within the nerve sheath.

FIGS. **12A** and **12B** illustrate an embodiment of an exemplary anchor body **171** with a fixation hook **172** used to secure the leads **110** once the electrode **115** is implanted into the DRG **40**. FIG. **12A** is a section view of a portion of the spinal cord **13** showing the dorsal root **42**, ventral root **41**, DRG **40** and peripheral nerve **44**. In this illustrative embodiment, a catheter **70** is used to maneuver the electrode **115**, leads **110** and anchor **171** about the DRG **40** implantation site. Once a suitable site is identified, the hook **172** is inserted into the fascia layer of the DRG. The hook **172** may have various shapes and contours to adapt it to engaging with and securing to the outer DRG layer or within the outer DRG layer. FIG. **12B** illustrates an exemplary anchor body **171** and hook **172** mounted onto the distal end of a catheter **70**. The anchor body **171** and hook **172** may be maneuvered into position using the

14

catheter **70** alone or in combination with other suitable surgical, endoscopic or minimally invasive tools. Similarly, the electrode **115**, leads **110** may be moved into position for implantation on, in or about targeted neural tissue. In other alternative electrode embodiments, the electrode **115** is implanted on, in or about a DRG is provided with a flexible tip that helps to prevent or mitigate chronic friction and ulceration.

Alternatively, the electrode leads **110** or other supporting or anchoring structures may be attached to the adjacent bony structure, soft tissue or other neighboring anatomical structures. In addition, there may also be provided a fixation, anchoring or bonding structure positioned proximal to the electrode anchor **172** that absorbs some or all proximal movement of the leads **110** so that the electrode is less likely to be pulled from or dislodged from the implantation site. The goal of the anchoring and other strain absorbing features is to ensure the electrode remains in place within or is less likely to migrate from the implanted position because of electrode lead **110** movement (i.e., lead **110** movement pulls the electrode **115** from the implantation site or disrupts the position of the electrode **115** within the implantation site). It is to be appreciated that numerous techniques are available to aid in electrode placement including percutaneous placement of single/multiple hooks or anchors, vertebral anchor or posts, microsutures, cements, bonds and other joining or anchoring techniques known to those of ordinary skill in the art. It is also to be appreciated that other components of the stimulation system embodiments described herein may also be adapted for attachment to surrounding tissue in proximity to the stimulation site or near the electrode implantation site. Other components include, for example, the stimulation controller, master controller, slave controller, pulse generator, pharmacological agent reservoir, pharmacological agent pump and the battery.

FIG. **12C** illustrates an exemplary anchoring of electrode leads **110** to bone surrounding the electrode implantation site. FIG. **12C** illustrates a section view through a portion of the spinal cord **13** showing the ventral root **41**, the dorsal root **42** and dorsal root ganglion **40**. FIG. **12C** also illustrates the surrounding bone of the spine such as vertebral body **1110**, the spinous process **1115**, the pedicle **1120**, the lamina **1125**, the vertebral arch **1130**, transverse process **1135**, and facet **1140**. Electrode **115** is implanted into the DRG **40** and the electrode leads are held in place using a suitable anchor **111**. In this embodiment, the anchor **111** is secured to the vertebral body **1110**. The anchor **111** represents any suitable manner of securing the bony portions of the spine such as tacks, staples, nails, cement, or other fixation methods known to those in the surgical or orthopedics arts. A strain relief **122** is present between anchor **111** and the DRG **40** (see FIGS. **13A** and **14A**). The strain relief **122** is used to absorb motion that may move the electrode **115** within the DRG **40** or remove the electrode from the DRG **40**. In this illustrative embodiment, the strain relief **122** is a coiled portion of the electrode lead **110**. One or more strain reliefs **122** may be provided between the anchor **111** and the DRG **40** or between the anchor **111** and the battery or controller of the stimulation system (not shown).

FIGS. **13A-14B** illustrate mono-polar and bi-polar stimulation component embodiments of the present invention. FIG. **13A** illustrates a mono-polar stimulation component that has a proximal connector **126A** adapted to be connected to a pulse generator. A distal electrode **115** is configured to be implanted within the body at a stimulation site. The distal electrode may be a mono-polar electrode **115A** (FIG. **13B**) or a bi-polar electrode **115B** (FIG. **14B**). The electrodes are sized for

15

implantation into a nerve root ganglion and will vary according to the nerve root selected. In additional alternative embodiments, the electrode leads and electrode are adapted and sized to advance within a nerve sheath to a nerve root ganglion. The electrodes or their casing may be made of inert material (silicon, metal or plastic) to reduce the risk (chance) of triggering an immune response. Electrodes should be studied for suitability to MRI and other scanning techniques, including fabrication using radio-opaque materials as described herein.

Returning to FIG. 13A, an electrical lead 110 is connected to the proximal connector 126A and the distal electrode 115. A strain relief mechanism 122 is connected in proximity to the stimulation site. The illustrated strain relief mechanism is formed by coiling the electrical lead 110. Other well known strain relief techniques and devices may be used. A fixation element 124 adapted to reduce the amount of movement of the electrical lead proximal to a fixation point is positioned in, on, or through an anatomical structure proximal to the stimulation site. Multiple elements are provided to mitigate or minimize strain and force transmission to the micro-leads 110 or the microelectrodes 115 because the microelectrodes and microelectrode leads used herein are very small and include fine, flexible wires on the order of 1 mm or less and in many cases less than 0.5 mm. Representative electrode and lead dimensions will be described in greater detail below (FIGS. 15A, 15B). As such, in some embodiments, strain and movement may be absorbed or mitigated by the fixation element 124, the strain relief 122 and the electrode anchor 117 (if included). The fixation element 124 may be, for example, a loop, or a molded eyelet. The fixation element may be sutured, tacked, screwed, stapled, bonded using adhesives or joined using other techniques known to those of ordinary skill to secure the fixation element within the body for the purposes described herein.

In one specific implantation embodiment, the method of implanting the electrode is modified based on consideration of the small size and delicate nature of the microelectrode and microelectrode leads. As such, high force actions are taken first followed by light force actions. In this way, the fine microelectrode and microelectrode lead materials are not present during high force operations. Consider an example where an electrode of the present invention will be implanted into a DRG. In an exemplary embodiment, the fixation element 124 is a loop sized to allow passage of the electrode 115. Perform the high force operation of anchoring or otherwise fixing (i.e., adhesion) the fixation element into a vertebral foramen adjacent the selected DRG stimulation site. In general, the fixation site should be as close as practical to the stimulation site. In one specific embodiment, the fixation site is within 3 cm to 5 cm of the stimulation site. Optionally, a guide wire attached to the loop remains in place and is used to guide the electrode and leads to the loop and hence to the implant site. The electrode and leads are passed through the loop (with or without use of a guide wire). The electrode is then implanted on or in the DRG. Optionally, an anti-strain device 122 may also be positioned between the electrode in the implantation site and the fixation element 124. In one illustrative embodiment, a section of microelectrode lead containing a plurality of loops is used as an anti-strain device 122. Finally, the microelectrode lead is secured to the loop using a suitable locking device. It is to be appreciated that the above method is only illustrative of one method and that the steps described above may be performed in a different order or modified depending upon the specific implantation procedure utilized.

16

In some embodiments, there may also be provided an anchoring mechanism proximal to the distal electrode 115. Examples of anchoring mechanisms include, for example, anchors 117 illustrated in FIGS. 13B and 14B. In still further embodiments, the anchoring mechanism is adapted to anchor the distal electrode 115 within the stimulation site. For example, the anchor mechanism may remain stowed flat against the electrode body 118 during implantation and then deploy from within a nerve root ganglion to anchor against the interior nerve root wall to support the electrode and prevent electrode migration or pull-out. In some embodiments the anchoring mechanism and the distal electrode are integrally formed and in other embodiments they are separate components. In some embodiments, the anchoring mechanism is formed from a polymer or a silicone.

Selective nerve stimulation affords the use of smaller electrodes. Smaller electrodes create less impingement and are less susceptible to unwanted migration. However, as electrode surface area decreases the impedance of the electrode increases (FIG. 15A). As such, some electrode embodiments will have an impedance much greater than the impedance of conventional stimulation electrodes. In one embodiment, the impedance of a microelectrode of the present invention is more than 2500Ω. This difference in impedance also impacts the performance requirements of stimulation systems, pulse generators and the like used to drive the microelectrodes described herein.

Distal electrodes may come in a wide variety of configurations, shapes and sizes adapted for implantation into and direct stimulation of nerve root ganglion. For example, the distal electrode 115 may be a ring of conductive material attached the leads 110. Alternatively, the distal electrode 115 may be formed from an un-insulated loop of electrical lead. The loop electrode is appealing and has improved wear properties because, unlike the ring that must be joined to the leads 110, the loop is formed from the lead and no joining is needed. In still other embodiments, the electrode may be an un-insulated portion of the lead.

Regardless of configuration, electrodes of the present invention are sized and adapted for implantation into, on or about a ganglion such as, for example, a dorsal root ganglion or a ganglion of the sympathetic nervous system. It is to be appreciated that the size of the electrode varies depending upon the implantation technique and the size of the target ganglion. An electrode implanted through the DRG dura (i.e., FIG. 9A) may be less than 5 mm since the diameter of a DRG may be only 3-5 mm. On the other hand an electrode adapted for implantation along the peripheral nerve sheath (i.e., FIG. 11) may be longer than the electrode that passes through the dura but may face other design constraints since it must advance distally within the nerve sheath to reach the DRG. It is to be appreciated that dimensions of electrode embodiments of the present invention will be modified based on, for example, the anatomical dimensions of the implantation site as well as the dimensions of the implantation site based on implantation method.

FIG. 15B provides some exemplary electrode surface areas for electrode embodiments formed from wire diameters between 0.25 mm to 1 mm, having widths of 0.25 mm or 0.5 mm. As such, embodiments of the present invention provide distal electrode surface area that is less than 0.5 mm². In other embodiments, the distal electrode surface area is less than 1 mm². In still other embodiments, the distal electrode surface area is less than 3 mm².

The sizes of the electrodes of the present invention stand in contrast to the conventional paddle 5 having dimensions of about 8 mm wide and from 24 to 60 mm long (FIG. 1). One

result is that conventional stimulation electrodes have larger electrode surface areas than electrode embodiments of the present invention. It is believed that conventional electrodes have an impedance on the order of 500 to 1800Ω operated using a stimulation signal generated by a 10-12 volt pulse generator. In contrast, stimulation electrode embodiments of the present invention have an impedance on the order of 2 kΩ or about 2500Ω, from 2 kΩ to 10 kΩ or higher or even in the range of 10 kΩ to 20 kΩ. As will be described in greater detail below, some pulse generator embodiments of the present invention operate with voltages produced by DC-DC conversion into ranges beyond conventional stimulation systems.

The electrodes may be formed from materials that are flexible and have good fatigue properties for long term use without material failure. The electrode material should be formed from a biocompatible material or coated or otherwise treated to improve biocompatibility. Additionally, electrode materials should be opaque to imaging systems, such as fluoroscopy, used to aid electrode placement during implantation procedures. Examples of suitable materials include but are not limited to Pt, Au, NiTi, PtIr and alloys and combinations thereof. Electrodes may also be coated with a steroid eluding coating to reduce inflammation at the implantation or stimulation site.

With the small surface areas, the total energy required for stimulation of the DRG is drastically reduced because we can achieve high current densities with low currents. One advantage of using microelectrodes is that only a small volume of tissues in the immediate vicinity of the electrodes is stimulated. Another advantage of using microelectrodes is the correspondingly smaller pulse generator and because of decreased battery size.

In addition to the implantable electrodes described above, alternative electrode embodiments may also be used to selectively stimulate a nerve root ganglion. FIG. 16 illustrates an embodiment where conductive rings 205, 207 are positioned on either end of a dorsal root ganglion 40. When activated, the rings 205, 207 capacitively couple stimulation energy into the DRG 40. FIG. 17 illustrates an alternative capacitive stimulation configuration where the capacitive plates 210, 212 are attached to the DRG dura. Embodiments of the present invention are not limited to only one pair of capacitive plates but more than one pair may be used. FIG. 18 illustrates two pairs of capacitive plates attached to the dura of a DRG 40. One pair includes plates 210, 212 and the other pair includes plate 214 and another plate (not shown). As an alternative to attaching the plates directly to the dura, the plates may be attached to an electrode support element 230 adapted to slip around and engage with the DRG dura. Once the electrode support element 230 is in position about the DRG, the plates are properly positioned to selectively stimulate a DRG. The present invention is not limited to only capacitively coupled stimulation energy. FIG. 20 illustrates another alternative embodiment where a wire 235 is wrapped around a DRG 40 creating coils 236 that may be used to inductively couple stimulation energy into a nerve root ganglion. For purposes of discussion, these embodiments have been described in the context of stimulation a DRG. It is to be appreciated that the techniques and structures described herein may also be used to stimulate other nerve root ganglion, other neural structures or other anatomical features.

FIGS. 20A and 20B illustrate another electrode embodiment adapted for implantation through neural tissue. Piercing electrode 900 has a body 902, a distal end 904, and a proximal end 906. A electrode surface or component 912 receives stimulation signals and energy from a pulse generator/controller (not shown) via a suitable lead 914. The distal and 904

has a tip 908 adapted to pierce the targeted neural tissue. In addition, one or more anchors 910 are provided at the distal end to help secure the electrode body 902 within the targeted neural tissue. A securing ring 920 (FIG. 20B) is provided to secure the electrode body 902 to or relative to the targeted neural tissue. The anchors 910 may be in a first or stowed position against the electrode body 902 during insertion through the neural tissue and then be moveable into a second or deployed position away from the electrode body 902. In the deployed position (FIGS. 20A, 20C and 20D) the anchors 910 resist the movement of the electrode 900 out of the neural tissue. Numerous alternative anchor configurations are possible. Anchor 910 could be a series of individual struts arrayed in a circular pattern or struts with material between them similar to the construction of an umbrella. Anchor 910 could also be a single anchor.

The electrode 900 includes a body 902 adapted to pass completely through targeted neural tissue while positioning the electrode 912 within a portion of the targeted neural tissue. In this illustrative embodiments that follow, the electrode body 902 is adapted to fit within a DRG 40 (FIG. 20D) or a ganglion of the sympathetic chain (FIG. 20C). The electrode 912 may be placed in any location on the electrode body 902 to obtain the desired stimulation or modulation level. Additionally, the electrode 912 may be placed so that modulation or stimulation energy patterns generated by the electrode 912 will remain within or dissipate only within the targeted neural tissue.

A securing ring 920 is used to hold the electrode body 902 in position within and relative to the targeted neural tissue. The securing ring 920 is ring shaped having an annulus 922. In some embodiments, the inner surface 942 is used as a friction locking surface to engage and hold the electrode body 902. In other embodiments, the inner surface 942 contains a surface treatment to secure the electrode body. In still other embodiments, the inner surface 942 is adapted to mechanically engage with and secure the electrode body 902. The securing ring 920 may be formed from a suitable elastic or inelastic material that may be secured to the electrode body 902 and the outer layer of the targeted neural tissue to help prevent electrode pull out or dislodgement. The securing ring 920 may be formed from a biocompatible material suited to gluing or mechanically affixing the ring 920 to the electrode body 902 and the tissue outer layer. The securing ring 920 may be present during or positioned after the electrode 900 is implanted into the targeted neural tissue. In one alternative embodiment, the securing ring 920 is secured to the DRG outer layer and has a complementary engaging feature positioned to engage with an engaging feature on the electrode 900. The electrode body 902 advances through the securing ring annulus 922 and into the DRG 40 until the complementary engaging features engage and stop further distal motion of the electrode body 902 into the DRG. The complementary engaging features may be used alone or in combination with anchors 910 to assist in electrode 900 placement within neural tissue such as a DRG or other ganglion.

FIGS. 20C and 20D illustrate electrode embodiments adapted for implantation through targeted neural tissue illustrated in a section view of the spinal cord 13. Additional details of the various portions of the spinal cord section 14 are described below with regard to FIG. 38. Also illustrated in these views are exemplary sensory pathways 52/54 and motor pathways 41P within peripheral nerve 44 and roots 41/42 and entering the spinal cord. Alternative implantation sites and stimulation alternatives are described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,871,099, incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

19

In the illustrative embodiment of FIG. 20C, the electrode 900 is positioned to remain in a non-central location within the targeted neural tissue. In this embodiment, the targeted neural tissue is a ganglion 992 within the sympathetic chain 990. Additional details and specific targeted neural tissue within the sympathetic chain are described below with regard to FIGS. 32 and 33. The electrode 912 is placed on or in the electrode body 902 so that when the electrode body 902 passes through the ganglion 992 and is seated within the securing ring 920 the electrode 912 is in the desired position within the interior of the ganglion 992. Other electrode 912 placement within the targeted neural tissue is possible, for example, by varying the length of the electrode body 902, the angle of penetration into the targeted neural tissue or the position of initial penetration into the targeted neural tissue.

In the illustrative embodiment of FIG. 20D, the electrode 900 is positioned to remain in a generally central location within the targeted neural tissue. In this embodiment, the targeted neural tissue is a DRG 40. The electrode 912 is placed on or in the electrode body 902 such that when the electrode body 902 is seated within the securing ring 920, then the electrode 912 is in the middle of about the middle or center the DRG 40. As before the securing ring 920 and flat anchor 911 secure the electrode 900 in the desired position within the DRG 40. The flat or flap anchor 911 provides similar functionality as the anchor 910. The anchor 911 has flat anchors rather than the curved anchors 910.

In some embodiments, the stimulation electrode tip may be coated with a pharmacological agent. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 21, a coating 130 covers that portion of the electrode within the DRG 40. In other embodiments, less or more of the electrode or other implanted components may be suitably coated to achieve a desired clinical outcome. FIG. 21 also illustrates a coating 130 on the electrode shaft or portion of the electrode exterior to the DRG. The coating 132 may be the same or different than the coating 130. For example, the tip coating 130 may include a distal coating containing an agent to aid in the effective stimulation of the DRG. The tip coating 130 may also include a more proximal coating portion (i.e., near where the electrode pierces the dura) that contains an agent to prevent fibrous growth about the electrode. In a further embodiment, the shaft coating 132 would also contain an agent to prevent fibrous growth about the electrode. Additionally, the shaft coating 132 may be selected based on providing a pharmacological agent to interact with the tissue in the ventral root (i.e., the implantation technique in FIG. 11) or within the peripheral nerve sheath.

Examples of desired clinical outcomes provided by pharmacological agents used as coatings include but are not limited to reduction of scar tissue development, prevention of tissue growth or formation on the electrode, anti-inflammation, channel blocking agents and combinations thereof or other known pharmacological agents useful in treatment of pain, or neurological pathologies. In other alternative embodiments, the pharmacological agent may include other compounds that, when placed within the body, allow the pharmacological agent to be released at a certain level over time (i.e., a time released pharmacological agent). In some embodiments, the pharmacological agent is an anti-inflammatory agent, an opiate, a COX inhibitor, a PGE2 inhibitor, combinations thereof and/or another suitable agent to prevent pathological pain changes after surgery. Other suitable pharmacological agents that may be used include those used to coat cardiac leads, including steroid eluting cardiac leads or other agents used to coat other implantable devices.

Embodiments of the present invention include direct stimulation of a nerve root ganglion or other neurological

20

structure while releasing a pharmacological agent from an electrode used to provide stimulation. In one embodiment, the pharmacological agent is released before the electrode is activated. In other embodiments, the pharmacological agent is released after or during the electrode is activated. In still other embodiments, the pharmacological agent is pharmacologically active in the nerve root ganglion during stimulation of the nerve root ganglion. It is to be appreciated that embodiments of the present invention may be altered and modified to accommodate the specific requirements of the neural component being stimulated. For example, embodiments of the present invention may be used to directly stimulate a dorsal root ganglion or a nerve root ganglion of the sympathetic system using the appropriate pharmacological agents, agent release patterns and amounts as well as stimulation patterns and levels.

Turning now to FIG. 22, various stimulation mechanisms are shown. While these various mechanisms potentiate pain, each of them acts on the primary sensory neuron. The primary modulator of this cell is its cell body, the DRG 40. One aspect of the present invention is to advantageously utilize the anatomical placement of the DRG 40 within the nervous system to complement other treatment modalities. In another embodiment, stimulation of the DRG 40 as described herein is used in conjunction with a substance acting on a primary sensory neuron. As shown, the other mechanisms are nearer to the illustrated tissue injury than the DRG cell body 40. Put a different way, the DRG 40 is upstream (i.e., closer to the brain/spinal cord 13) of the other pain mechanisms. Thus, this is another illustration of how upstream DRG stimulation may be used to block and/or augment another pain signals.

Electrophysiological studies suggest that Prostaglandin E2 (PGE2), produced by COX enzymes, increases the excitability of DRG neurons in part by reducing the extent of membrane depolarization needed to activate TTX-R Na⁺ channels. This causes neurons to have more spontaneous firing and predisposed them to favor repetitive spiking (translates to more intense pain sensation). Also illustrated here is how other pro-inflammatory agents (Bradykinin, Capsaicin on the Vanilloid Receptor [VR1]) converge to effect the TTX-R Na⁺ channel. Opiate action is also upstream from the TTX-R Na⁺ channel modulation. Embodiments of the present invention advantageously utilize aspects of the pain pathway and neurochemistry to modify electrophysiological excitability of the DRG neurons where electrical stimulation is coupled with pharmacological agents (electrical stimulation alone or in combination with a pharmacological agent) to optimize the efficacy of the stimulation system.

Synergy of electrical and pharmacological modulation may also be obtained using a number of other available pharmacological blockers or other therapeutic agents using a variety of administration routes in combination with specific, directed stimulation of a nerve root ganglion, a dorsal root ganglia, the spinal cord or the peripheral nervous system. Pharmacological blockers include, for example, Na⁺ channel blockers, Ca⁺⁺ channel blockers, NMDA receptor blockers and opioid analgesics. As illustrated in FIGS. 23A and 23B, there is an embodiment of a combined stimulation and agent delivery electrode. Note the bipolar electrodes 115B on the tip, the coating 130 and the beveled tip shape for piercing the dura during implantation. The electrode tip is within the DRG epinurium 72 and well positioned to modify and/or influence c-fiber 55 responsiveness. In the illustration, circles represent Na⁺ ions, triangles represent Na⁺ channel blockers (such as, for example, dilantin—[phenytoin], tegretol—[carbamazepine] or other known Na⁺ channel blockers). As the agent is released from coating 130, receptors on c-fiber 55 are blocked

21

thereby decreasing the response of the c-fiber below the response threshold (FIG. 23B). Because the activation potential of the c-fiber has been lowered, the larger diameter A-fiber is preferentially stimulated or the response of the A-fiber remains above the threshold in FIG. 23B.

Embodiments of the present invention also provide numerous advantageous combinational therapies. For example, a pharmacological agent may be provided that acts within or influences reactions within the dorsal root ganglia in such a way that the amount of stimulation provided by electrode 115B may be reduced and yet still achieve a clinically significant effect. Alternatively, a pharmacological agent may be provided that acts within or influences reactions within the dorsal root ganglia in such a way that the efficacy of a stimulation provided is increased as compared to the same stimulation provided in the absence of the pharmacological agent. In one specific embodiment, the pharmacological agent is a channel blocker that, after introduction, the c-fiber receptors are effectively blocked such that a higher level of stimulation may be used that may be used in the presence of the channel blocking agent. In some embodiments, the agent may be released prior to stimulation. In other embodiments, the agent may be released during or after stimulation, or in combinations thereof. For example, there may be provided a treatment therapy where the agent is introduced alone, stimulation is provided alone, stimulation is provided in the presence of the agent, or provided at a time interval after the introduction of the agent in such a way that the agent has been given sufficient time to introduce a desired pharmacological effect in advance of the applied stimulation pattern. Embodiments of the stimulation systems and methods of the present invention enable fine tuning of C-fiber and A β -fiber thresholds using micro-electrodes of the present invention having pharmacological agent coatings coupled with electrical stimulation. Representative pharmacological agents include, but are not limited to: Na⁺ channel inhibitors, Phenytoin, Carbamazepine, Lidocaine GDNF, Opiates, Vicodin, Ultram, and Morphine.

FIGS. 23C and 23D illustrate alternative embodiments for combination neurostimulation and pharmacological agent delivery systems. Additional details of the controller and pulse generated systems suitable for these operations are described below with reference to FIGS. 26-29. While described using combined pump and reservoir delivery systems, it is to be appreciated that the pump for moving the pharmacological agent from the reservoir to and out of the electrode and the reservoir for storing the pharmacological agent before delivery may be two separate components that operate in a coordinated fashion. Pumps and reservoirs may be any of those suited for controlled delivery of the particular pharmacological agent being delivered. Suitable pumps include any device adapted for whole implantation in a subject, and suitable for delivering the formulations for pain management or other pharmacological agents described herein. In general, the pump and reservoir is a drug delivery device that refers to an implantable device that provides for movement of drug from a reservoir (defined by a housing of the pump or a separate vessel in communication with the pump) by action of an operatively connected pump, e.g., osmotic pumps, vapor pressure pumps, electrolytic pumps, electrochemical pumps, effervescent pumps, piezoelectric pumps, or electromechanical pump systems. Additional details of suitable pumps are available in U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,845,770; 3,916,899; 4,298,003 and 6,835,194, each of which is incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

FIG. 23C illustrates a combined system controller and pulse generator 105B adapted to control the delivery of pharmacological agents from the agent reservoir and pump 195.

22

The pharmacological agent pumped from the agent reservoir and pump 195 travels via a dedicated conduit into a common supply 110F, through a strain relief 122F and into the agent and stimulation electrode 2310. The common supply 110F may be a single line containing both electrode control and power signals from the controller 105B as well as agent delivered from the pump 195 or there could be two separate lines joined together. Regardless of configuration, common supply 110F simplifies implantation procedures because a single line is used to connect the electrode 2310 to the controller 105B and the pump 195.

The combination neurostimulation and pharmacological agent delivery electrode 2310 includes a body 2312 adapted to fit within targeted neural tissue. In this illustrative embodiment, the electrode body 2310 is adapted to fit within a DRG 40. An electrode 2318 is positioned on or in the electrode body 2312 or may be the electrode body 2312. The electrode 2318 is adapted to receive signals and power from the pulse generator 105B via the common supply 110F. The electrode 2318 may be placed in any location on the electrode body 2312 to obtain the desired stimulation or modulation level. Additionally, the electrode 2318 may be placed so that modulation or stimulation energy patterns generated by the electrode will remain within or dissipate only within the targeted neural tissue. In this illustrative embodiment, the electrode 2318 is positioned to remain in a generally central location within the targeted neural tissue. In this embodiment, the targeted neural tissue is a DRG 40. The electrode 2318 is placed on or in the electrode body 2312 such that when the electrode 2310 is seated within the securing ring (described below), then the electrode 2318 is in the middle of about the middle or center the DRG.

A securing ring 2315 is used to hold the electrode body 2312 in position within and relative to the DRG 40. The securing ring 2315 may be formed from a suitable elastic or inelastic material that may be secured to the electrode body 2312 and the outer DRG layer to help prevent electrode pull out or dislodgement. The securing ring 2315 may be formed from a biocompatible material suited to gluing or mechanically affixing the ring 2315 to the electrode body 2312 and the DRG outer layer. The securing ring 2315 may be present during or positioned after the electrode 2310 is implanted into the DRG. In one alternative embodiment, the securing ring is secured to the DRG out layer and has a complementary engaging feature positioned to engage with an engaging feature on the electrode 2310. The electrode body 2312 advances through the securing ring 2315 and into the DRG 40 until the complementary engaging features engage and stop further distal motion of the electrode body 2312 into the DRG. The complementary engaging features may be used to prevent an electrode 2310 intended to be positioned within a DRG from piercing through a DRG.

There is at least one conduit or lumen (not shown) within the electrode body 2312 that provides communication from the portion of the common supply 110F containing the pharmacological agent to the distal opening 2316. In operation, pharmacological agent(s) within the pump/reservoir 195 are delivered, under the control of controller 105B, to the common supply 110F, through the electrode body 2312 and out the distal opening 2316 into the DRG interior. Note that this embodiment of the distal opening 2316 contains a beveled edge that may be used to pierce the DRG during the implantation procedure.

FIG. 23D describes several alternative embodiments suited to combined neurostimulation and pharmacological agent delivery systems and electrodes.

23

In contrast to FIG. 23C that uses a combined controller, pulse generator and battery 105B, the configuration in FIG. 23D provides a distributed system similar to those described with regard to FIGS. 28 and 29. A pulse generator and controller 105C and a pharmacological agent reservoir and pump 2395 receive power from battery 2830 using suitable connections 2307 and 2305, respectively. The pharmacological agent reservoir and pump 2395 may have its own controller operated independently of the controller/generator 105C, have its own controller operated under the control of the controller/generator 105C (i.e., in a master/slave relationship) or be operated under the control of the controller/generator 105C. Electrode 912 receives stimulation power from generator 105C via leads 110. Perfusion ports 928 are connected via one or more conduits (not shown) within the electrode body 902 and the conduit 2396 to the pharmacological agent reservoir and pump 2395.

The embodiment of electrode 900A is similar to the electrode 900 of FIG. 20A. Electrode 900A also includes perfusion ports 928 within the electrode body 902 that are in communication with the contents of the pump and reservoir 2395 via the conduit 2396. The electrode body 902 is long enough for implantation through targeted neural tissue. While illustrated implanted generally central to a DRG 40, it is to be appreciated that the electrode body 902 may be longer or shorter to accommodate different sizes of targeted neural tissue or different placement within neural tissue. For example, FIG. 20C illustrates an embodiment of electrode 900 implanted in a non-central position within a ganglion of the sympathetic chain. The electrode 900A includes a proximal end 904 with tip 908 and anchors 910. A securing ring 920 (described above) is provided to secure the electrode body 902 to or relative to the DRG 40. The anchors 910 may be in a first or stowed position against the electrode body 902 during insertion through the DRG and then be moveable into a second or deployed position away from the electrode body 902. In the deployed position (FIG. 23D) the anchors 910 resist the movement of the electrode 900A out of the DRG 40. Numerous alternative anchor configurations are possible. Anchor 910 could be a series of individual struts arrayed in a circular pattern or struts with material between them similar to the construction of an umbrella. Anchor 910 could also be a single anchor.

The electrode 912 and perfusion ports 928 may be positioned along the electrode body 902 in any position suited for the delivery of neurostimulation and pharmacological agents. In the illustrated embodiment, the electrode 912 is positioned generally central within the DRG and the perfusion ports 928 are near the distal end of the electrode body 902. Other configurations are possible and more or fewer electrodes and perfusion ports may be used in other embodiments. For example, a perfusion port 928 could be located near the center of the DRG while an electrode 912 could be located elsewhere on the electrode body 902 so as to minimize the stimulation energy transmitted beyond the DRG and into surrounding tissue. One or more electrodes 912 could be positioned along the electrode body 902 so that the stimulation energy remained within (i.e., nearly completely attenuated within) the DRG 40 or other targeted neural tissue.

In one specific embodiment, the distal tip 908 has a point suited for piercing the dura layers to provide access for the electrode body 902 through the DRG. The tip 908 is advanced through the DRG until the anchors 910 pass through the opening formed by the tip 908 and extend as shown in FIG. 23D. Once the anchors 910 are through the DRG and extended, the electrode body 902 may be withdrawn slightly to engage the anchors 910 against the DRG dura. Thereafter,

24

the securing ring 920 is advanced into position around the electrode body 902 and against the outer layer of DRG 40. When implanted into the DRG 40, electrode 900A is held in place using the anchors 910 and the securing ring 920. In other embodiments, the securing ring 920 may be used without the anchors 910. In another embodiment, the anchors 910 are used without the securing ring 920 or the securing ring 920 is replaced by another set of anchors that are adapted to secure the proximal end of the electrode body 902 to or in proximity to the DRG.

FIG. 24 is a table that includes several exemplary infusion pharmacological agents. The pharmacological agents are listed along the left side. Moving to the right, closed circles and open circles are used to indicate the level of support for using a particular pharmacological agent with a particular type of pain or other condition. Closed circles indicate evidence from controlled trials or several open-label trials and general acceptance or utility. Open circles indicate a less extensive base of evidence. For example in the treatment of restless leg syndrome (RLS), benzodiazepines have evidence of general acceptance or utility while gabapentin has a less extensive base of evidence. These and other pharmacological agents may be provided into the body to have a cooperative pharmacological result on the neural tissue(s) either alone or in combination with stimulation provided by embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the pharmacological agent is provided at the stimulation site and in other embodiments the pharmacological agent is provided using a stimulation electrode embodiment adapted to deliver one or more pharmacological agents.

Consider the following specific example. Nociceptors express a specific subclass of voltage-gated sodium channel. These TTX-R Na⁺ channels are believed to contribute significantly to action potential firing rate and duration in small-diameter sensory neurons (i.e., c-fibers). Embodiments of the present invention may provide the appropriate channel blocker to synergistically improve neurostimulation capabilities. For example, a combination stimulation and release of a pharmacological agent may be used to provide Na channel blockers directly within the dorsal root ganglia interfascicular space, adjacent to c-fiber or within a pharmacologically active position such that the agent interacts with the channel.

Embodiments of the present invention also enable the advantageous use of ion channels in the nervous system as targets for pharmacological agents combined with selective direct stimulation. Na⁺ channels and gabapentin sensitive Ca²⁺ channels are upregulated after nerve-injury. Channel blockers can suppress abnormal C-fiber neural excitability. Na⁺ and Ca⁺ channel targets distributed along the pain pathway are illustrated in FIG. 25. Embodiments of the present invention advantageously utilize the specific anatomy and features of the dorsal root ganglia (DRG) to improve the efficacy of pharmacological agents. In one specific example, note that the DRG contains both TTX-sensitive Na⁺ channels (Nav1.3), TTX-resistant Na⁺ channels (1.8,1.9), and gabapentin sensitive Ca²⁺ channels. FIG. 25 shows a number of dorsal root ganglia, peripheral nervous system and spinal cord afferent pain pathways. Note the alterations in voltage-dependent Na⁺ and Ca²⁺ channel subunits after chronic nerve injury associated with neuropathic pain. In addition, there is an increase in the expression of Nav1.3 channels and Na⁺ channel 3 (Nav 3) and Ca²⁺ channel 2-1 (Cav 2-1) subunits in dorsal root ganglion neuron cell bodies, and in the expression of Nav1.3 in second-order nociceptive neurons in the spinal cord dorsal horn 37. The tetrodotoxin-resistant Na⁺ channel subunits Nav1.8 and Nav1.9 are also redistributed from dorsal root ganglion neuron cell bodies to peripheral

25

axons and pain receptors at the site of injury. These changes are thought to result in spontaneous ectopic discharges and lower the threshold for mechanical activation that leads to paraesthesias, hyperalgesia and allodynia.

In one aspect of the present invention, these channels are the target of a stimulation provided by embodiments of the systems and stimulation methods of the present invention. The stimulation may include electrical stimulation alone, a pharmacological agent delivered directly or via the DRG, a pharmacological agent delivered directly or via the DRG in combination with electrical stimulation, or electrical stimulation of the DRG in combination with the delivery of a pharmacological agent elsewhere in the pain pathway. In one particular embodiment, delivery of a pharmacological agent elsewhere in the pain pathway is upstream of the dorsal root ganglion or the nerve root ganglion being stimulated. In another embodiment, delivery of a pharmacological agent elsewhere in the pain pathway is downstream of the dorsal root ganglion. In another specific embodiment, stimulation is provided to a nerve ganglion in the sympathetic nervous system and a dorsal root ganglion up stream of or otherwise positioned to influence or block signals originating from the nerve ganglion.

Alternative embodiments of the methods and systems of the present invention may be used to repair or assist in the repair of neurological tissue in the spinal cord.

In another aspect of the present invention, there is provided methods and systems for the selective neurostimulation of the dorsal root ganglia for the regeneration of neurological tissue. For example, electrical stimulation may be provided selectively to the DRG, a portion of the DRG or in proximity to the DRG with or without a pharmacological agent to produce conditions within the DRG to assist in, encourage or otherwise promote the regeneration of neurological tissue.

In a specific embodiment where pharmacological agents may be provided by embodiments of the present invention, there is provided a method and/or system to induce intraganglionic cAMP elevation for the regeneration of sensory axons utilizing the mechanisms suggested by Neumann S, Bradke F, Tessier-Lavigne M, Basbaum A I. in the article entitled, "Regeneration of Sensory Axons Within the Injured Spinal Cord Induced by Intraganglionic cAMP Elevation. (see Neuron. 2002 Jun 13; 34(6):885-93, incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.) The work of Neuman et al. demonstrated the regeneration of the central branches of sensory neurons in vivo after intraganglionic injection of db-cAMP. Horizontal sections through a lesion site taken from db-cAMP-injected animals shows regenerating fibers. A neurostimulation electrode adapted for delivery of a pharmacological agent may be used for intraganglionic delivery of db-cAMP. Intraganglionic delivery of db-cAMP may be accomplished using any of the techniques described herein for the delivery of a pharmacological agent including, for example, a coating on all or part of an electrode body or the use of suitably positioned perfusion ports.

FIG. 26 illustrates an embodiment of a pulse generator **105** according to one aspect of the present invention. Similar to conventional stimulation pulse generators, communication electronics **102** have a receiver for receiving instructions and a transmitter for transmitting information. In one embodiment, the receiver and the transmitter are implantable in the body and adapted receive and transmit information percutaneously. The control electronics **106** includes a microcontroller **103** having conventional features such as program memory **103.1**, parameter and algorithm memory **103.2** and data memory **103.3**. A battery **130** is also provided and may be located with and part of the pulse generator (i.e., FIG. 27)

26

or implanted at a location separate from the pulse generator (i.e., FIG. 28). Switches **109** are provided to couple stimulation energy from the DC-DC converter **113** to the stimulation sites (i.e., electrodes located at STIM1-STIM4) under the control of the microcontroller **103**.

Programmable parameters are modified in accordance with transcutaneous RF telemetry information received by communication electronics **102**. The telemetry information is decoded and used by the control electronics to modify the pulse generator **105** output as needed. The output of the pulse generator or a stimulation program may be modified dynamically. Pain often correlates to certain activities such as walking, bending or sitting. An activity level sensor may be used to detect the amount or degree of activity. The level of activity could be an input to dynamically modify the stimulation program to determine the appropriate level of stimulation. Alternatively or additionally, different pre-programmed stimulation algorithms may be designed for an individual patient based on that specific patient's pattern of activity. Pre-programmed stimulation algorithms may be stored in an appropriate medium for use by a stimulation system described herein. Conventional transcutaneous programming techniques may also be used to update, modify or remove stimulation algorithms.

Pain often correlates to certain positions such as standing or laying down. A position sensor may be used to detect position of the patient. The position of the patient could be an input to the stimulation control system to dynamically modify the stimulation program to determine the appropriate level of stimulation. One example of such a sensor is a multi-axis accelerometer. A conventional 3 or 4 axis accelerometer could be implanted into a patient or maintained on the patient to provide position, activity level, activity duration or other indications of patient status. The detected indications of patient status could in turn be used in determining stimulation level and pattern. The position sensor can be set up or calibrated once positioned or implanted on or in a person. The calibration aids the sensor in correctly recognizing the person's orientation and activity levels.

Optionally, a position sensor **108** is located within the same physical housing as implantable generator. If desired, the position sensor may be located elsewhere on the body in an implanted location or may be worn externally by the person. Position information from the position and/or activity sensor **108** is provided to the pulse generator **105** using suitable means including direct connections or percutaneous transmission. Although a number of embodiments are suitable, the preferred mode employs, by way of example and not to be construed as limiting of the present invention, one or more accelerometers to determine patient state including, at least, the ability to sense whether the person is erect or recumbent. Additionally, the position sensor could be adapted to provide an indication of activity or level of activity such as the difference between walking and running. In another embodiment, a position sensor **108** may be positioned to sense specific motion such as activity of a particular part of the body to detect specific movement of a body part or limb that, for example, is undergoing post-surgical physical therapy. Using this position sensor embodiment, when the person started activity related to physical therapy, the sensor would detect such activity and provide the appropriate stimulation. In additional alternatives, the position and/or activity sensor includes one or more multi-axis accelerometers.

As discussed above, microelectrode embodiments of the present invention have electrode sizes and surface areas that are considerably smaller than conventional stimulation electrodes so that they may be implanted according to the meth-

ods described herein. As discussed above, the smaller electrode size leads to increased electrical impedance and a need for voltages above 15 volts, above 20 volts or even up to as much as 40 volts in order to provide sufficient stimulation current to the microelectrode. Conventional pulse generators employ capacitive switching arrays to provide voltages up to 12 v from a 3 v battery for conventional neurostimulation systems. It is believed that the large electrical losses introduced by the switches used in conventional capacitive systems would render them incapable of providing sufficient current to drive the microelectrodes of the present invention. As such, the pulse generator **105** departs from conventional pulse generators by using a DC-DC converter to multiply the battery voltage up to the ranges needed to operate the stimulation systems described herein.

In one embodiment of the pulse generator of the present invention, there is at least one switch **109** connected to at least one implantable electrode having an impedance greater than 2,500 ohms. There is also provided a DC-DC converter adapted to provide a stimulation signal to the at least one implantable electrode under the control of the controller **103** that is configured to control the output of the DC-DC converter **113**. Additionally, the pulse generator, the at least one switch, the DC-DC converter and the controller are implantable in the body. In another aspect, the controller **103** controls the output of the DC-DC converter **113** to deliver a stimulation signal according to an algorithm for blocking pain signals. In one aspect, the DC-DC converter is configured to provide a voltage from 0 volts to 30 volts. In another aspect, the DC-DC converter is configured to provide a voltage from 0 volts to 40 volts.

FIG. **27** illustrates one embodiment of an electrode connector according to the present invention. The electrode connector **120** has a proximate end **123** adapted to connect with a pulse generator **105A** and distal end **121** adapted to connect with the electrode connector **126**. The electrode connector distal **121** end is adapted to connect to a plurality of microelectrode leads **110**/connectors **126** depending upon how many microelectrodes **115** are used. Optionally, a portion of the electrode connector **120** may be configured as a return electrode in some embodiments.

In conventional stimulation systems, the stimulation electrode leads are connected directly to the pulse generator resulting in an implantation procedure that includes tunneling multiple leads from the pulse generator to each electrode. This technique has the added shortcoming of multiple connection points into the pulse generator each one required to be sealed and a source of potential wear. In contrast, embodiments of the present invention utilize fine micro leads **110** and microelectrodes **115** that would likely hinder the success of conventional tunneling procedures. Rather than the conventional tunneling of multiple electrodes and their leads, the electrode connector **120** is a flexible electrical connector used to bridge the distance between the site where the pulse generator is implanted and the one or more stimulation sites where the microelectrodes will be implanted. It is to be appreciated that the electrode connector is sufficiently long to extend from the pulse generator implanted at a first anatomical site to the microelectrode implanted at a second anatomical site.

The pulse generator **105A** differs from conventional pulse generators in that it has a single connection point to the electrode connector rather than multiple connection points to each stimulation electrode. Advantageously, the fine micro leads and microelectrodes are thus implanted and span a distance now made much shorter by the electrode connector **120**. The microelectrode leads **110** now only span a distance between

the electrode connector distal end **121** and the microelectrode **115** at the nerve root ganglion implantation site.

FIG. **27** also illustrates an embodiment of a stimulation component. The stimulation component includes a proximal connector **126**, a distal electrode **115** configured to be implanted within the body at a stimulation site and an electrical lead **110** connected to the proximal connector and the distal electrode. The distal electrode may be, for example, a mono-polar electrode or a bi-polar electrode. In some embodiments, there is also provided a strain relief mechanism in proximity to the stimulation site and/or a fixation element adapted to reduce the amount of movement of the electrical lead proximal to a fixation point in an anatomical structure proximal to the stimulation site (See e.g., **12A/B**, **13A**, **14A**). The proximate connector **126** is adapted to connect with the electrode connector distal end **121**.

In still further embodiments, the stimulation component may also include an anchoring mechanism proximal to the distal electrode (e.g., deformable anchor **117** in FIGS. **13B**, **14B**). In some embodiments, the anchoring mechanism is adapted to anchor the distal electrode within the stimulation site and may optionally be integrally formed with the distal electrode. The anchoring mechanism is formed from a polymer, a silicone or other flexible, biocompatible material. In some embodiments, the anchoring mechanism and/or the electrode body is formed from a flexible, biocompatible material that has been adapted to include a radio opaque material. Suitable biocompatible materials may biocompatible polymeric biomaterials featuring radio-opacity or other polymeric biomaterials made radio-opaque through addition of a 'contrast agent', usually a non-toxic salt or oxide of a heavy atom.

FIG. **28** illustrates another stimulation system embodiment of the present invention. In the illustrative embodiment, a pulse generator **2806** is connected to four individually controlled microelectrodes **115** implanted in four separate nerve root ganglion, here dorsal root ganglions DRG1 through DRG4. The innovative stimulation system of FIG. **28** differs from conventional stimulation systems in that the battery **2830** is separate from the pulse generator **2806**. An electrical connection (e.g., wires **2804**) suited to carry the battery power extends from the battery **2830** to the pulse generator **2806**. A microelectrode lead **110** is connected proximally to the pulse generator **2806** using connectors **2812** and distally to a microelectrode **115**. The pulse generator **2806** includes similar functionality of earlier described pulse generator embodiments such as a DC-DC converter configured to provide a voltage from 0 volts to 30 volts, a voltage from 0 volts to 40 volts or other suitable voltage ranges to drive microelectrodes described herein. The battery **2830**, the pulse generator **2806** separate from the battery, the electrical connections **2804**, the microelectrode lead **110** and the microelectrode **115** are adapted to be implanted in the body.

Additional embodiments of the local pulse generator **2806** have a compact size that enables implantation of the pulse generator **2806** in proximity to the stimulation site. Implanting the local pulse generator **2806** closer to the implantation site of the microelectrodes **115** desirably allows the use of shorter microelectrode leads **110**. Embodiments of the pulse generator **2806** are sufficiently small to allow implantation in the back near the spinal levels to be stimulated, the upper back near the C1-C3 levels for migraine relief (FIG. **30**). In one specific embodiment, the pulse generator **2806** has an overall volume of less than 200 mm³. In another specific embodiment, at least one dimension of the pulse generator **2806** is 2 mm or less or at least one dimension of the pulse generator **2806** is 10 mm or less.

29

One embodiment of a multiple pulse generator system is illustrated in FIG. 29. The multiple pulse generator embodiment is similar to the system of FIG. 28 with the addition of a second pulse generator 2806B connected to the first pulse generator 2806A at connection points 2810 using connectors 2814. As with the earlier system, the second pulse generator 2806B is separate from the battery 2830. Additionally, there are provided microelectrode leads 110 connected proximally using connectors 2812 to the second pulse generator 2806B and distally to microelectrodes 115. The microelectrodes 115 are implanted within nerve root ganglia, here, dorsal root ganglia at implantation sites DRG5-DRG8. FIG. 29 illustrates eight implanted electrodes in separate implantation sites that could include dorsal root ganglion, nerve root ganglion of the sympathetic nervous system or other stimulation sites within the body.

It is to be appreciated that in one aspect the pulse generator 2806 and the second pulse generator 2806B are independently programmable. In another aspect, the pulse generator 2806A and the second pulse generator 2806B are adapted to operate in a master-slave configuration. Numerous coordinated stimulation patterns are possible for each electrode of a pulse generator or of all the electrodes in the system. In still further aspects, the activation of one microelectrode is coordinated with the activation of a second microelectrode. In one specific aspect, the microelectrode and the second microelectrode are activated by the same pulse generator. In another specific aspect, the microelectrode is activated by the pulse generator 2806A and the second microelectrode by the second pulse generator 2806B in a coordinated manner to achieve a therapeutic outcome. For example, the microelectrode is active when the second microelectrode is active or the microelectrode is inactive when the second microelectrode is active. In still further embodiments, the microelectrode is implanted in a dorsal root ganglion and the second microelectrode is implanted in a nerve root ganglion of the sympathetic nervous system. It is to be appreciated that the systems of FIGS. 27 and 28 may be configured as discussed above with regard to FIGS. 3-7.

In additional alternative aspects, specific embodiments of the present invention may be used to provide direct stimulation alone or in combination with released therapeutic agents as described herein for the treatment of headaches, migraine etc. As such, embodiments of the present invention may be used to provide direct, selective DRG, spinal cord and/or peripheral nervous system stimulation (using stimulation alone or in combination with the delivery of a therapeutic agent as described herein) to all, part or a combination of the C1-C3 levels to provide relief, reduction or mitigation of pain resulting from headache, migraine or other such related conditions. There is provided a method of stimulating neural tissue to treat a condition by stimulating an electrode implanted to stimulate only a dorsal root ganglion on a spinal level wherein the stimulation treats the condition. As illustrated in FIG. 30, the spinal level comprises C1, C2 or C3 and the condition is a headache, or more specifically, a migraine headache.

In another alternative aspect, embodiments of the present invention provide sensory augmentation as a treatment for diabetic neuropathy. In one embodiment, direct stimulation of the DRG, spinal cord and/or peripheral nervous system using the techniques described herein are provided to stimulate or otherwise generate a type of stochastic resonance that will improve, enhance or provide added neurological stimulation. Stochastic resonance is the addition of noise to a system to improve signal clarity. For example, the introduction of direct neurological stimulation to the appropriate

30

DRG, group of DRG, the spinal cord and/or peripheral nervous system may provide, for example, improved vestibular balance or other improvement or mitigation of a condition induced by diabetic neuropathy. The added neurological stimulation (either stimulation alone or in combination with therapeutic agent(s)) may be used, for example, to improve the nerve fiber function of nerve fibers damaged, improperly functioning or otherwise impaired as a result of diabetic neuropathy. Exemplary stimulation patterns induced utilizing direct stimulation techniques described herein to help raise the sub-threshold signal (FIG. 31A) to or above the threshold level (FIG. 31B).

In other embodiments of the present invention there are provided methods of treating physiological disorders by implanting at least one stimulation electrode at a specific location along the sympathetic nerve chain. Preferably, the present invention provides a method of therapeutically treating a variety of physiological disorders or pathological conditions by surgically implanting an electrode adjacent or in communication to a predetermined site along the sympathetic nerve chain on the affected side of the body or, if clinically indicated, bilaterally. FIG. 32 illustrates a schematic of the autonomic nervous system illustrating sympathetic fibers and parasympathetic fibers, including several nerve root ganglion.

Accordingly, embodiments of the present invention may be used in conjunction with other neurostimulation techniques by combining an upstream stimulation using specific DRG stimulation of the present invention with another stimulation acting downstream of the DRG stimulation. As used herein, downstream and upstream refer to pathways closer to the brain (i.e., upstream) or further from the brain (i.e., downstream). For example, several stimulation techniques are described by Rezai in U.S. Patent Publication 2002/0116030 and U.S. Pat. No. 6,438,423 and by Dobak in publication 2003/0181958, all of which are incorporated herein by reference. In specific aspects, embodiments of the present invention may be used to provide electrical and combinational (i.e., with a pharmacological agent) stimulation of the sympathetic nerve chain as described by Rezai alone (i.e., using the appropriate DRG stimulation or implanting directly into a nerve root ganglion.). Alternatively or additionally, embodiments of the present invention provide specific, direct stimulation of one or more DRG are used in combination with the stimulation techniques described by Rezai (i.e., conventional stimulation of the sympathetic chain using one or more of Rezai's techniques).

FIG. 33 illustrates how embodiments of the present invention may be advantageously utilized for neurostimulation of the sympathetic chain using direct stimulation of the associated DRG. This aspect of the present invention takes advantage of the anatomical placement of the DRG relative to the sympathetic chain in conjunction with gate control theory described herein to direct DRG stimulation for control of the sympathetic system. Thus, selective neurostimulation techniques of the present invention may be advantageously employed to, for example, provide and/or augment therapeutic tools in regards to weight control, hormonal regulation, vascular perfusion, etc. Additional alternative embodiments include the use of specific stimulation to provide organ system autonomic modulation. Through implantation of stimulation electrodes and systems of the present invention to stimulate the appropriate DRG upstream of the associated portion(s) of the sympathetic chain, the associated system may be controlled, modulated or influenced utilizing the electrical and/or pharmacological agent stimulation techniques described herein.

31

In one specific example, by stimulating the DRG **40** associated with spinal level **13.3**, the portion of the sympathetic chain associated with hormonal regulation may be altered, modified, influenced or controlled. Similarly, by stimulating the DRG **40** associated with spinal level **13.2** and/or level **13.1**, the portion of the sympathetic chain associated with the gastrointestinal tract, or urinary incontinence (i.e., urinary bladder, urethra, prostate, etc.) may be altered, modified, influenced or controlled. Additionally, the direct stimulation techniques described herein may be used to directly stimulate individual nerve ganglion of the sympathetic nervous system, such as, for example, the celiac ganglion, superior mesenteric ganglion, inferior mesenteric ganglion and others listed in FIGS. **32**, **33** or known to those of ordinary skill. It is to be appreciated that the stimulation systems, pulse generators and microelectrodes and other components are modified and sized as needed to allow for direct stimulation of the ganglion including implanting into the ganglion or within adjacent nerve sheaths leading to the ganglion. FIG. **34** illustrates the combined direct stimulation of a DRG **38** with microelectrode **115** as well as a suitable sized microelectrode **115** implanted in a sympathetic nerve root ganglion **63**. The electrodes in FIG. **34** may stimulated independently or in a coordinated fashion to achieve the desired clinical outcome or other desired result. Similar to the discussion above for electrode placement in the DRG, electrode placement for the sympathetic chain may also be unilateral, bilateral, on adjacent portions of the chain or separate portions of the chain as needed.

One aspect of the present invention is a method of modulating a neural pathway in the sympathetic nervous system including stimulating a spinal dorsal root ganglion upstream of at least one ganglion of the sympathetic nerve chain to influence a condition associated with the at least one ganglion of the sympathetic nerve chain. In one specific embodiment, stimulating a spinal dorsal root ganglion comprises stimulating a spinal dorsal root ganglion upstream of at least one ganglion of the sympathetic nerve chain to influence functional activation of a bodily system associated with the at least one ganglion along the sympathetic nerve chain, to influence functional activation of an organ associated with the at least one ganglion along the sympathetic nerve chain, or to influence functional inhibition of a bodily system associated with the at least one ganglion along the sympathetic nerve chain. In specific embodiments, the ganglion of the sympathetic nerve chain is a cervical ganglion, a thoracic ganglion, or a lumbar ganglion.

In another aspect, the method of modulating a neural pathway in the sympathetic nervous system includes application of stimulation using an electrode exposed to the spinal dorsal root ganglion epinurium. In another aspect, the application of stimulation is performed using an electrode within the dorsal root ganglion. Alternatively, or in addition, stimulation may be applied to at least one ganglion along the sympathetic nerve chain using an electrode exposed to the at least one ganglion or using an electrode implanted within the at least one ganglion or applying stimulation along the sympathetic nerve chain.

FIGS. **35**, **36** and **38** illustrate how embodiments of the stimulation system, methods and microelectrodes described herein may be advantageously employed for direct stimulation of the spinal cord. Those of ordinary skill will appreciate that a pulse generator, battery and other stimulation system components described above would be used to drive the spinal electrodes described herein. As illustrated in FIG. **35**, a microelectrode **115** has been advanced through the epidural space **26** through the dura matter **32** and into the spinal cord

32

13. In the illustrated embodiment the electrode **13** is positioned in the spinal cord **13** with an anchor **124** in the vertebral body **70** along with a strain reducing element **122** (i.e., a coil of microelectrode lead **110**). FIG. **36** illustrates two electrodes implanted into the spinal cord **13** for direct stimulation. Optionally or additionally, anchors and seals may also be provided and are further described below with regard to FIGS. **37A**, **B** and **C**. While the illustrative embodiments show an electrode implanted at a depth into the spinal cord, electrodes may be surface mounted as well. For example, electrodes may be placed in positions that just pierce the outer surface up to a depth of 1 mm or alternatively at depths from 2 mm to 12 mm or as otherwise needed to accomplish the desired stimulation therapy or treatment.

Embodiments of the present invention provide a method of stimulating the spinal cord that includes implanting an electrode into the spinal cord and providing stimulation energy to spinal cord fibers using the electrode. In one aspect, the stimulation energy is provided to the spinal cord using the electrodes at a level below the energy level that will ablate or otherwise damage spinal cord fiber. In specific embodiments, the spinal microelectrode is implanted into the cuneate fascicle, the gracile fascicle, the corticospinal tract, an ascending neural pathway, and/or a descending neural pathway.

In another specific embodiment, a method for stimulation of the spinal cord includes piercing the spinal dura matter and placing an electrode into contact with a portion of the intra-madullary of the spinal cord. Additionally, the portion of the intra-madullary of the spinal cord may include the cuneate fascicle, the gracile fascicle, the corticospinal tract. Additionally or optionally, the electrode may be implanted into the portion of the intra-madullary of the spinal cord including a portion of the intra-madullary that controls pain from the upper extremities, the lower extremities, an upper spinal cord pain pathway, or a lower spinal cord pain pathway. Additionally or optionally, an electrode may be implanted into and directly stimulate a portion of the intra-madullary of the spinal cord that influences control of an organ, such as for example, autonomic bladder stimulation, or other body function.

FIGS. **37A-37C** illustrate alternatives to sealing the spinal dura **32** after the dura is pierced during the electrode implantation procedure. In one aspect, the present invention provides methods of forming an opening in the spinal dura, passing the electrode through the opening in the spinal dura and sealing the opening in the spinal dura **32**. Additionally, atraumatic anchors **3717** may also be provided distal to the electrode **3715** to assist with maintaining electrode position in the spinal cord **13** after implantation, as well as resist pull out. The anchors **3717** may be formed from any suitable biocompatible material that is flexible and will not contaminate the surrounding cerebral spinal fluid. In FIG. **37A**, a single fibrous seal **3710** is disposed distal to the anchor **3717** against the interior wall of the dura **32**. Examples of suitable seal materials for seals **3710**, **3720** and **3725** include, for example, tissue glue, synthetic fibers, gel foam, hydrogels, hydrophilic polymers or other materials having fabric characteristics suited to sealing. Each of the seals described herein may be separate from or integrally formed with an anchor **3717**. FIG. **37B** illustrates an embodiment where a seal **3720** is provided on the exterior wall of the dura **32**. FIG. **37C** illustrates the use of two seals. A seal **3725** against the inner dura wall and a seal **3720** against the outer dura wall. Examples of suitable seal materials for seals **3720**, **3725** include: vascular suture pads, polyurethane, fluorinated polymers, biodegradable polymers such as PLA/PGLA. Seals as described herein are adapted to prevent CSF leakage through

the hole in the dura formed during electrode implantation. In alternative embodiments, the component passing through the dura after implantation (either a microelectrode shaft or microelectrode leads depending upon design) has a material or surface that engages with the seal **3717**, **3720** and assists in sealing the dura. In one specific embodiment, the seal **3720** could be a fabric pad such as a vascular suture pad and the seal **3725** could be a polymer or a form of tissue glue.

FIG. **38** illustrates and summarizes numerous specific targets for stimulation and electrode placement within the nervous system. Nerves on only one side of the spinal cord are shown. FIG. **38** illustrates several alternative microelectrode placement locations depending upon desired stimulation, neural response or treatment of a condition. Embodiments of the present invention employ appropriately small sized microelectrodes thereby enabling the selective stimulation of numerous specific portions of the nervous system in addition to the specific embodiments described herein. Microelectrodes are illustrated in the DRG dura (**1**), within the DRG through the dura (**2A**), within the DRG by traversing the peripheral nerve sheath (**2B**). The spinal cord may be stimulated by implanting electrode(s) into ascending pathways **92**, descending pathways **94** or fibers **96**. Spinal cord stimulation may also be accomplished by placing microelectrodes into specific spinal cord regions such as the cuneate fascicle **3**, gracile fascicle **4** or the corticospinal tract **5**. Additionally, electrodes may be placed in the spinal cord near the root entry into the cord, such as dorsal root **42H** and ventral root **41H**. Embodiments of the present invention also enable microelectrode placement and direct stimulation can be advantageously positioned and applied so as to influence and/or control bodily function(s).

In some embodiments, direct stimulation refers to the application of stimulation or modulation energy to neural tissue by placing one or more electrodes into contact with the targeted neural tissue. In some specific embodiments, contact with the targeted neural tissue refers to electrode placement on or in a nerve ganglion. In other embodiments, one or more electrodes may be placed adjacent to one or more nerve ganglion without contacting the nerve ganglion. Electrode placement without contacting the nerve ganglion refers to positioning an electrode to stimulate preferentially only a nerve ganglion. Stimulation of preferentially only a nerve ganglion refers to electrode placement or electrode energy delivery to targeted neural tissue without passing the neurostimulation or modulation energy through an intervening physiological structure or tissue.

Several advantages of the inventive stimulation system and methods described herein are made clear through contrast to existing conventional stimulation systems such as those described in, for example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,259,952; 6,319,241 and 6,871,099 each of which are incorporated herein by reference.

Consider for example a conventional stimulation electrode placed within a vertebral body for stimulation of a dorsal root ganglion. A portion of the stimulation energy provided by an electrode so positioned will be attenuated or absorbed by the surrounding bone structure. As a result, the initial stimulation energy provided in this system must be large enough to compensate for propagation losses through the bone while still having sufficient remaining energy to accomplish the desired stimulation level at the dorsal root ganglion. The stimulation energy of this conventional system will also be non-specifically applied to the intervening physiological structures such as the spinal cord, peripheral nerves, dorsal root, ventral root and surrounding tissue, cartilage and muscle. Each of these intervening physiological structures will be subjected to the

stimulation energy and may cause undesired consequences. In addition, each of these physiological structures will be subjected to and may attenuate or absorb the stimulation energy before the energy reaches the desired neural tissue.

Consider the additional examples of conventional stimulation electrodes placed (a) within the dorsal root between the spinal dura and the spinal cord and (b) within the peripheral nerve. Neurostimulation of a dorsal root ganglion from these positions is complicated by ways similar to the above example. The stimulation energy provided by the electrode must pass through or may be absorbed by numerous surrounding physiological structures. A portion of the stimulation energy provided by an electrode in position (a) will be attenuated or absorbed by, for example, the surrounding dorsal root sheath, cerebral spinal fluid and the spinal cord. The stimulation energy provided in this system must be large enough to compensate for propagation losses through the dorsal root sheath, cerebral spinal fluid and protective spinal cord layers (i.e., the spinal meninges: pia mater, arachnoid mater and dura mater) while still having sufficient remaining energy to accomplish the desired stimulation level in the dorsal root ganglion. The stimulation energy will also be non-specifically applied to the spinal cord. A portion of the stimulation energy provided by an electrode in position (b) will be attenuated or absorbed by, for example, the peripheral nerve bundles including motor nerve bundles. The stimulation energy provided in this system must be large enough to compensate for propagation losses through the peripheral nerve while still having sufficient remaining energy to accomplish the desired stimulation level in the dorsal root ganglion. Unlike the present invention, the stimulation energy provided by electrode placement (b) will also apply stimulation energy to the motor nerves within the peripheral nerve. Electrode placement in positions (a) and (b) above each have intervening physiological structures that are subjected to the stimulation energy and may cause undesired consequences. In addition, each of the intervening physiological structures will be subjected to and may attenuate or absorb the stimulation energy before the energy reaches the desired neural tissue.

Embodiments of the present invention provide stimulation energy via one or more electrodes placed on, in or in proximity to the targeted neural tissue. The intimate nature of the electrode placement allows substantially less stimulation energy to be used to achieve a comparable neurostimulation level. One reason it is believed that that lower power levels may be used in the inventive techniques is that the lack of attenuation losses caused by subjecting intervening physiological structures to stimulation energy. Conventional systems remain concerned about the generation of heat and the possibility of heat induced tissue damage because conventional stimulation systems subject intervening tissues and targeted tissues to stimulation energy. Many conventional stimulation systems are provided with or utilize tissue temperature for control or feedback. Tissue temperature is a useful parameter for these conventional systems because they provide sufficient energy to substantially or measurably raise the temperature of the surrounding tissue or intervening structures. These conventional stimulation systems raise the temperature of surrounding tissue by tens of degrees Celsius while maintaining temperatures below the average temperature range that is thermally lethal such as that used by heat lesioning procedures (i.e., below 45 C).

In contrast to systems that raise the temperature of both targeted and surrounding tissue, it is believed that the stimulation energy levels provided by embodiments of the present invention are low enough that the temperature of the targeted neural tissue does not increase a measurable amount or less

35

than one degree Celsius. The stimulation levels provided by some embodiments of the present invention are within or below (a) the milliwatt range; (b) the millijoule range and/or (c) the microjoule range. It is also believed that the stimulation levels provided by some embodiments of the present invention are sufficiently low that the temperature of tissue surrounding an electrode is unaffected, increases by less than 5 degrees C., or less than 1 degree C. Moreover, it is believed that the stimulation energy levels provided by other embodiments of the present invention are low enough that the temperature of the surrounding tissue and other physiological structures is below a measurable amount using conventional temperature measurement techniques or below one degree Celsius. It is to be appreciated that the stimulation energy levels provided by embodiments of the present invention are substantially below those conventional stimulation systems that measurably elevate the temperature of surrounding tissue or operate at levels approaching the level of thermal ablation and lesioning.

It is to be appreciated that embodiments of the specific stimulation techniques of the present invention may be utilized alone to achieve the described stimulation techniques or in a combined upstream or downstream configurations with the described stimulation techniques and systems described in the following references (each of which is incorporated herein in its entirety): U.S. Pat. No. 5,948,007 to Starkebaum; U.S. Pat. No. 5,417,719 to Hull; U.S. Pat. No. 6,658,302 to Kuzma; U.S. Pat. No. 6,606,521 to Paspa; and U.S. Pat. No. 5,938,690 to Law.

While preferred embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described herein, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that such embodiments are provided by way of example only. Numerous variations, changes, and substitutions will now occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. It should be understood that various alternatives to the embodiments of the invention described herein may be employed in practicing the invention. It is intended that the following claims define the scope of the invention and that methods and structures within the scope of these claims and their equivalents be covered thereby.

36

What is claimed is:

1. A system for stimulating a dorsal root ganglion within a body, the system comprising:

a lead comprising an elongate body having a plurality of electrodes disposed thereon, wherein the lead is configured for positioning at least one of the plurality of electrodes within a distance of the dorsal root ganglion so as to provide selective stimulation of the dorsal root ganglion; and

an implantable pulse generator connectable with the lead so as to provide stimulation energy to a selection of the plurality of electrodes which provides stimulation to the dorsal root ganglion without intervening vertebral bone while selectively stimulating the dorsal root ganglion.

2. A system as in claim **1**, wherein the plurality of electrodes are individually energizable.

3. A system as in claim **1**, wherein one or more of the plurality of electrodes receive no stimulation energy.

4. A system as in claim **1**, wherein one or more of the plurality of electrodes receive less stimulation energy than others.

5. A system as in claim **1**, wherein the lead is shaped for advancement through an epidural space of the body.

6. A system as in claim **1**, wherein the lead is shaped for advancement through a foramen.

7. A system as in claim **1**, wherein the plurality of electrodes comprises at least one pair of electrodes in a bipolar arrangement.

8. A system as in claim **1**, wherein the plurality of electrodes comprises more than one pair of electrodes in a bipolar arrangement.

9. A system as in claim **1**, wherein the lead is configured for positioning the selection of the plurality of electrodes outside of the dura of the dorsal root ganglion while the at least one of the plurality of electrodes is positioned within the distance of the dorsal root ganglion.

10. A system as in claim **1**, wherein the implantable pulse generator provides stimulation so that selectively stimulating the dorsal root ganglion comprises stimulating sensory nerves without stimulating motor nerves.

11. A system as in claim **1**, wherein the lead is shaped for advancement laterally toward the dorsal root ganglion.

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